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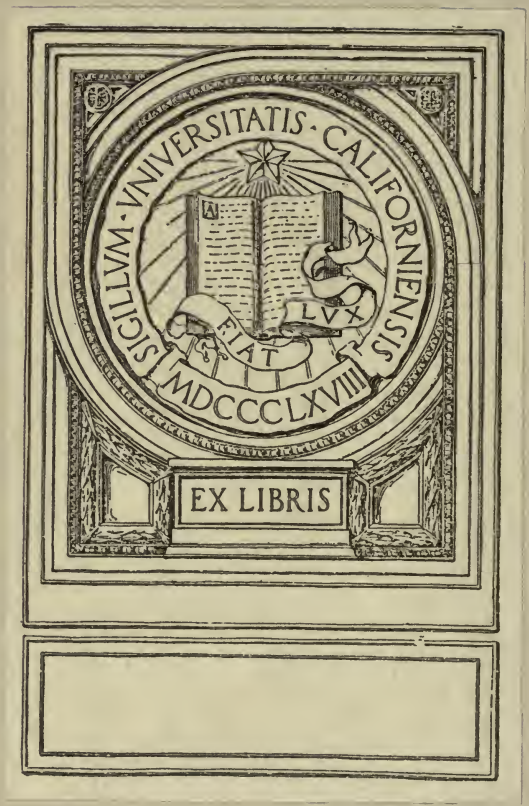

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WHEN LABOUR RULES

by

THE RT. HON. J. H. THOMAS, M.P.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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FOREWORD

In the days preceding August, 1914, the vast majority of the people of this country took so limited a view of life that they failed entirely to realise the existence of forces which they had not actually experienced; whatever label they were pleased to attach to themselves they were, beneath the skin, as conservative as their insularity could possibly make them. It is true that they knew there were ever-growing forces in the land, but they did not recognise them as forces. They knew, for instance, that there were Socialists, but they identified them merely as people who wore red neckties and waved red flags and sometimes made rude remarks about the monarchy. Suffragettes were notoriety hunters. Trade Unionism was a movement promoted with the object of getting the lazy working man as much more than his pound of flesh as could be wrested from the employer.

That the Labour movement or the suffrage movement could in any way affect the economic life of the nation, let alone fundamentally affect the constitution of the country, was too preposterous to be thought of. These people saw the government of the land going on until Doomsday as it was going on then—Tory and Liberal, Liberal and Tory, change and change about with the swing of the pendulum—and they gave the subject as much interest and nearly as much enthusiasm as they accorded the University boat race.

The past six years have opened people's eyes to things as they are. Nevertheless, there is still a very large number of people who have not yet gained the ability to understand what they see, and of those who can see, there are some who make it their business to use every means within their power to distort the vision of the remainder.

I do not think that there is any one to-day who fails to realise that the old order of things can never be re-established. But there undoubtedly is an enormous number of people who utterly fail to comprehend the possibilities of the future and who, as a consequence, are filled with misgivings and forebodings. It is to these people I address this book : the people who, persuaded at last of the seriousness and strength of the Labour Movement, realise that before long Labour will rule, but fail to understand what it portends.

The capitalists and the people whose means are derived from securities are wondering what will happen to them when the workers take charge of the ship of State.

The black-coated workers of the cities—the middle classes—the people who have always had a tight squeeze to make ends meet and have long since given up hope of ever expecting anything else are wondering what will happen to them when Labour rules, and are questioning whether they will be robbed of the little they have; whether it will be worth while struggling any more.

Then there is the working man who has always voted Tory; who mistrusts his ' hot-headed fellow-workers,' and has always been content to leave his destiny in the hands of his ' betters,' as his father did before him—he also is perturbed at the prospect.

In the following chapters I seek to remove these anxieties by the plain statement of what I firmly believe will be the effect of Labour government. These views are my own; I am not professing to speak for the Labour Party or for any one whatever beyond myself. I do not for a moment expect that everything I write will be endorsed by my colleagues in the Labour Movement. I do not doubt that some will think my optimism too great; that others will consider it too small. But however true or false future events may prove my vision to be I do assert, with all the vehemence at my command, that Labour Rule will be entirely beneficent, and that its dealings with high and low, rich and poor, will be marked with broad-minded toleration and equity.

September, 1920.

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CHAPTER I

THE ENGLAND OF TO-MORROW

THERE is nothing Utopian in my vision of the England of to-morrow; I am not one of those confident and optimistic people who imagine that once Labour comes into power all will be well with the world; nevertheless, I do foresee a far happier England than any historian has yet been in a position to describe.

Utopia, as I understand it, is a place which cannot be improved upon; a State in which the social and political conditions have reached a standard which cannot be excelled; a State of ideal perfection. I cannot conceive England or any other country reaching the summit of such an ambition in a thousand to-morrows, but I can and do conceive an England which by to-morrow will have made greater strides towards perfection than our grandfathers would have believed to be possible within hundreds of years.

It may safely be assumed, however, that whatever progress to-morrow may be able to look back upon it will find human nature still very much what it is to-day; there will still be jealousies and bickerings and disputes and discontent—above all, there will be discontent, and were this not to be I, for one, would have but little hope of the future; but the discontent of to-morrow will differ fundamentally from the discontent of the past, inasmuch as it will not be based upon a sense of

injustice and will not be received in a spirit of hostility.

Furthermore, the grounds for discontent will be considerably fewer. The holiday-maker will still have the weather to grumble about; the dyspeptic will continue to complain of his breakfast, and the farmer will still find a grievance in the state of his crops, but no man will have occasion to protest against the conditions under which he is expected to live; no man will be able to state that some one else is living on his sweated labour; and no man will be able to proclaim that he lacks the opportunity to improve his lot if he wishes to do so.

There will be no profiteers, no unemployment, no slums, no hungry children. No man will be expected to work an excessive number of hours, and no man who is fit for work will be permitted to shirk it; the right to live upon the accumulated wealth of another will no longer exist; the right to the best and highest education the country can afford will no longer be the exclusive privilege of a favoured class, but will be open to all whose talents show that they will benefit by receiving it; the only qualifications for the higher civil service will be character and ability.

These are only some of the outstanding differences in the life of to-morrow from the life of to-day, but I have no doubt there are many people who feel thoroughly convinced that not one half of them will be realised for generations to come, if, indeed, they are ever realised.

These people will say that nothing but a revolution could bring about such startling and far-reaching changes, and that no revolution could have such beneficent effects.

But what is a revolution? I maintain that it is not necessarily a violent and bloody revolt; an orgy of outrage and assassination; an affair of red caps and barricades. A revolution may be perfectly bloodless and peaceful, and I maintain that we are in the midst of such a revolution at the present moment.

One of the many evidences of this peaceful revolution which would have created a storm forty, twenty, even ten years ago, is to be found in one of the paragraphs of the report of the Court of Enquiry concerning the conditions of employment of dock labour. This report was published last March, and the paragraph to which I refer is so remarkable that I reproduce it here in full :—

'The true and substantial case presented by the dockers was based upon a broad appeal for a better standard of living. What is a better standard of living? By this is not meant a right to have merely a subsistence allowance, in the sense of keeping the soul and body of the worker together, but a right to have life ordered upon a higher standard, with full regard to those comforts and decencies which are promotive of better habits, which give a chance for the development of a greater sense of self-respect, and which betoken a higher regard for the place occupied by these workers in the scheme of citizenship. The Court did not discourage this view; on the contrary, it approved of it; and it is fair to the Port Authorities and employers to say that its soundness was not questioned. In the opinion of the Court the time has gone past for assessing the value of human labour at the poverty line.

It is findings of this nature which are paving

the road to the England of to-morrow, but time was and not so long since, when such a statement as that given above would have been found only in a minority report and would have been viewed by the majority of people as a very estimable but highly unpractical expression of opinion.

Day by day it is becoming more and more widely recognised that Labour is not a menial task. It is an indispensable contribution to the welfare of the State, and in the interests of the State, no less than in its own interests, it is essential that it should be clothed in a proper dignity and invested in a fitting independence. The position and condition of Labour must not only be immeasurably improved, but it must be given every possible aid and opportunity to improve itself.

In the creation of the new England one of the first essentials is the clear recognition that Labour must have a share in all those things which govern the daily life; thirty years ago the appearance of a working man on the benches of the House of Commons was looked upon as an amusing but rather ridiculous anomaly; it was considered by many people to be the result of a freakish and unaccountable twist of the electoral mind—a matter of no importance which would be righted at the next election.

What serious help could a horny-handed son of toil give in the making of laws? All the evidence was against any such ability. To begin with, there was no precedent; furthermore, the son of toil lacked the niceness of apparel which in those days was so important a thing at Westminster; and how on earth could a man who had spent his days at the loom or in the coal mine possess that experienced knowledge of affairs which was so essential

an asset of the Member of Parliament? The worker was the human machine and his value was greater or less according to the intelligence of the employer who directed his labour.

We have progressed far since those days and now the public body which did not contain its Labour representative would be hard to find. But whereas it has come to be fully recognised that the workers, by their knowledge and ability, can be of invaluable assistance in the House of Commons, on County, Town, and District Councils, on Royal Commissions, on Conciliation Boards and Boards of Inquiry, it has still to be realised that, with a very few exceptions, the worker has no voice whatever in the control of the industry by which he gains his livelihood and which, therefore, is the primary concern of his daily life.

The workers must be taken more into the confidence of the employers and it must be more generally recognised that the men, by virtue of their close and daily contact with the details of their work, must often be able to suggest improvements which would be invaluable to the concern by which they are employed.

Tentative steps have already been taken in this direction. At Bourneville, for instance, there is in existence a Suggestion Scheme under which the workers are invited to recommend new or improved goods; improved methods of manufacture; new suggestions for advertising, and so forth. In the first half-year after the inception of this scheme two hundred and seventy-nine suggestions were made and fifty-one per cent. of them were accepted; in the half-year ending April 30th, 1912, just over thirteen hundred suggestions were received, of which four hundred and twenty-eight were accepted.

Prizes are awarded to the employees whose suggestions are accepted; in April, 1912, these amounted to £141 12s. 6d. This is the men's scheme to which I have referred; there is also a scheme run on similar lines for girl employees.

'It has been found,' says Mr Cadbury, 'that the good accomplished is not only in the pecuniary value to the firm or to the suggestor, but also in the development of the mental and creative power which makes both men and girls more efficient and valuable workers and fosters an intelligent independence.'

This is exceedingly interesting as an experiment and gives ample proof of the belief that industry would tremendously benefit by the workers having a share in the management, but, of course, this Bourneville experiment is not business; the award of honour and a small prize can hardly be considered an equitable arrangement.

Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction and nothing but the hedge of hostility, mistrust, and suspicion, which from time immemorial has separated the employers and workers, prevents the country from sharing the indisputable benefit which would accrue to individual employers and workers under the logical development of the experiment—a universal scheme of real partnership. This hedge must and will be broken down and then the nation will be filled with astonishment that partnership was not an accomplished fact years ago.

Another feature of the England of to-morrow will be the National ownership of Railways, Mines, Canals, Harbours, and Roads. Also, there is no reason against, but plenty of reasons in favour of the public ownership of the great lines of steamers.

Another very important industry which calls for public ownership is the generation of electricity, and, when this industry is taken over by the nation, instead of having a host of small and inadequate sources of supply, we shall see the erection of a score of huge super-power stations which will generate, at incredibly cheap rates, sufficient electricity for the use of every industrial establishment and every private household in the country. With proper arrangements for municipal co-operation in distribution, the whole country will be able to obtain the cheapest possible power, light, and heat.

It will be seen that by the nationalisation of these things alone—Coal, Transport, Heat, Light, and Power—not only will there be a very considerable impetus given to industry, but the individual as well as the public purse will feel a remarkable benefit. The cost of living will more closely approximate its pre-war scale, wages will tend to increase and the hours of labour to decrease within, of course, reasonable limits.

By the success of its commercial enterprises, by adequate taxation of unearned increment and by drastic death duties, the Government will be in a position to develop a really satisfactory Ministry of Health, and will be able to put Education, Insurance, Pensions, and other matters closely touching the social life of the nation upon a proper footing.

Profit-making Industrial Insurance Companies which now deal with the poor by a system of wasteful house-to-house collection of weekly pence will also have to be expropriated, and the great army of insurance agents will find their place in life as Civil Servants with equitable

conditions of employment; with the steadily increasing functions of the Government in Vital Statistics and Social Insurance, there will be plenty of work for them to do.

Another thing which will do much towards altering the appearance of the England of to-morrow from the England of to-day will be the change in the ownership of the liquor traffic. Any one who can read the signs of the times cannot fail to perceive the fact that the days of Mr Bung's bloated opulence are numbered.

To-morrow there will be no Mr Bung; the nation will control the manufacture and distribution of intoxicating liquor, and its consumption will in all probability be controlled under a scheme of local option by the various districts of the country.

This is but an indication of some of the more sweeping reforms which it may reasonably be assumed will be carried out to-morrow and which will be dealt with in more detail in the succeeding chapters. Let it now suffice for me to give a general and rough survey of what life under these new and improved conditions may be expected to be like.

In the first place, the lives of the people will without question be far happier than they have ever been before, and by 'the people' I do not merely mean those whom to-day we are accustomed to distinguish as the workers. To-morrow all who are bodily and mentally fit will be workers, and those to whom the experience is new will find considerably more happiness in it than they have hitherto found in their lives of unproductive idleness.

The people, or the workers, call them which you please, will all, without exception, live under

decent conditions; their homes will be decently built, will be sanitary, and will be so constructed that they will involve a minimum rather than a maximum amount of labour for those who have to live in them.

So far as the character of employment permits, the people who go to work will also perform their labour under the best possible conditions of health and comfort; there is no reason why a man should not be comfortable at his work if the circumstances of his task permit.

Hours of labour will be shorter than they are in general to-day, and there will be a greater tendency in those industries which lend themselves to it for the employment of two or more shifts.

Having a decent home, and having decent wages to spend upon it, and decent leisure in which to enjoy the home he is able to create, the worker will naturally be more disposed than he has been in the past to go to it instead of to the public-house, but when he goes to the latter, instead of finding a comfortless place of which the sole inducement to enter is the liquor which is handed over the counter, he will discover a bright and comfortable place in which to rest or amuse himself—a well-ordered place into which he will not be ashamed to take his wife, and in which he will be able to obtain whatever non-alcoholic drink he pleases without his choice being looked upon as in any way remarkable. Indeed, there is no reason why he should not, if he chooses, use these houses as places in which to meet and chat with his friends without being under any obligation whatever to spend his money—a sort of national club.

Everything that is possible will be done to foster

the desire for self-improvement; a great army of University Extension lecturers will be employed to give popular instruction, which will be available to all during the winter months, and there will be a National Theatre and a National Opera.

Those people who think they have a bent for arts and crafts will be given every opportunity of proving whether such is the case or not, and where latent talent in a sufficiently striking degree is discovered means will be provided for its proper and complete development.

The physical welfare of the people will not be forgotten, and there will be ample facilities for gymnastic exercises, while steps will be taken to foster a greater desire to take part in sports rather than to play the rôle of a mere onlooker. The open-air life will be encouraged, and there is no reason why it should not be made possible, by the granting of cheap fares, to create summer colonies in the country and at the seaside.

The tremendous importance of children will be recognised in the new England, and there will be State endowment of motherhood.

All children will receive a thorough education, and the school-leaving age will be raised; special attention will be paid to the aptitude of a child, and his education will be fitted to the trade or profession he shows most promise of succeeding in in after life.

Those who show themselves sufficiently gifted to benefit by it will be given the opportunity to continue their education at one of the Universities, and at the same time regard will be paid to the financial position of the family from which the child comes. It would not encourage a desire for education, nor would it foster ambition; indeed,

it would not be right from any point of view to penalise a family for the cleverness of its children, and if the family is proved to be in need of the money which the child would earn by going to work instead of continuing his education, that money, or some reasonable percentage of it, would have to be provided by the State.

This is my outline, sketched in the rough, of the England of to-morrow as I see it, but it must clearly be understood that I do not for a moment pretend that this will be the immediate outcome of Labour's accession to office.

Labour is possessed of no supernatural powers; its ranks are not filled with supermen.

On taking charge, its first duty will be to clear up the accumulation of errors made by its predecessors. This would be a giant's task in any circumstances, but in the face of the opposition of those people who by heredity, upbringing, and custom are so saturated in the present order of things that they cannot imagine any change which would not be for the worse, the work will be as formidable as can well be conceived. Nevertheless, I have confidence in Labour's power to perform it.

The old England stands condemned, and the foundations of the new England are already laid —for years past the progressive forces, with ever-increasing strength and efficiency, have been engaged in digging them out, and with the formation of a Labour Government the keystone will be placed in position, and slowly, but firmly and surely, a new, more healthy, more beautiful, and more enduring structure will be erected.

CHAPTER II

THE RIGHT TO WORK AND THE RIGHT TO REST

The right to work and the right to rest should be the common heritage of humanity.

It is a preposterous thing that under any system of civilisation there should be men who are fit and able to work but unable to enforce their right to do so; it is a preposterous thing that there should be any men who are unfit for work and unable to enforce their right to rest; it is a still more preposterous thing that there should be men fit and able to work yet permitted to live in idle luxury.

In England to-day there are thousands of men fit, able, and anxious to work who are living in enforced idleness; there are thousands of men who are unfit to perform efficient work, but whom the economic conditions of the country compel to carry on as best they can or go under; there are thousands of other men, fit and able but unwilling to work, who are permitted by the accident of birth to live in complete and useless idleness.

That the right to live is only earned by a recognition of the duty to work is to-day almost universally recognised—as a principle. Every individual of the nation has got to realise that any one who contributes nothing to the well-being of the country is essentially a parasite.

There are people—men, for the most part, who have lived upon the labours of others—who view the possibility of compulsory work with alarm and

indignation; they proclaim such a proposition to be full of injustice, and maintain that their duty is done and their share of the tasks of the world performed by the investment of their wealth in the country's industry.

This is a fallacy for the universal recognition of which we need but to recall the period of the war.

During the war the one person who was looked upon as an enemy to the country was he who did nothing. The man who invested his money in the war—to his own very great advantage—was recognised to have done a very excellent and praiseworthy thing, but he was by no means absolved from the duty to work either in France or at home, according to his strength and abilities.

What tribunal would have granted exemption to a man on the grounds that he had invested his inherited wealth, or even his self-earned riches, in the war? Certainly there was no man so foolish as to lodge any such claim.

If, then, it is admitted that it is the duty of every man to work in time of war, what logical argument can be found against the same duty in time of peace?

During the war the nation was fighting for its life; our every effort was directed solely and entirely to saving the life of the nation and with the end of the war that object was attained; but it would be a useless achievement were it succeeded by no effort to maintain the life which had been saved at such appalling cost.

Clearly the possession and investment of capital does not absolve one from the duty to work in peace-time any more than it does in time of war.

Some people there are who persist in maintaining

the contrary view on the ground that without their wealth labour would be brought to a standstill.

'But for my wealth,' they say, 'the workers would be without the necessary tools and machinery for their labour.'

On the other hand, it may be pointed out that but for the workers the tools and machinery would be of precious little value.

Argue round and about it as you please, we come back to the basic fact that wealth can only be provided by labour, and that being so, it surely must be self-evident that the more labour there is the more wealth there will be.

No one will deny for a moment that Capital is an excellent and a useful thing, but all the same, to-day no less than in the past, its excellence and usefulness are prone to be very much exaggerated.

Capital has no creative power; it cannot build a steam engine; it cannot assemble the parts of a motor-car; it can invent absolutely nothing. It brings its owner affluence by feeding upon the brain power and the muscular power of other people. As, therefore, it has decided limitations, surely it is only reasonable to claim that its returns should be limited accordingly.

The man who invests his brains in the invention of a new machine should have an equitable return for his investment, and the workers who invest their health and strength and industry in the building of the machine should also have an equitable return.

No one can suggest that the returns made at the present time to brain, muscle, and Capital are in the least equitable. Look back upon the last fifty years and you will find that whereas wealth has increased enormously, the conditions under

which the workers live have improved comparatively slightly and very haltingly, and that inventors have as often as not died in poverty.

When Labour rules, this state of things will be altered.

That Capital will be entitled to some return will be recognised, but its interest will most assuredly be limited, and the workers by hand and brain will receive a more equitable share of the wealth which they create. Such a readjustment will not have the effect of displacing the capitalists in favour of the workers as the privileged class—it will be a big step towards eliminating privilege altogether and placing every man upon the level which his ability and industry entitles him to occupy; furthermore, the nation will benefit immeasurably in the process.

I am not, of course, suggesting that the possession of wealth is a proof of idleness—some of the richest men are the hardest workers and are rich largely because of that, but there is also a very considerable class the members of which have never lifted a finger nor exercised a speck of gray matter in the creation of their wealth.

Those people will have to work and a proper limitation of their unearned wealth will provide the necessary incentive. What form their work will take will, of course, be a matter entirely for themselves; that is obvious, despite the grotesque pictures drawn by the enemies of Labour of the despotic form of government they would have you believe Labour intends to set up; of the tyrannical interferences they suggest it would make in the life of the individual and in the sanctity of the home.

Now let us turn to the question of those who

are unfit to perform efficient work but who to-day are compelled, by reason of their handicap, to accept a starvation wage in employments where efficiency is ignored so long as labour is cheap—and there are plenty of employers who can find a market, and a good market, for the fruits of such labour.

The analogy of the war still holds good. If men are totally incapacitated by fighting to save the life of their country, it is recognised to be the country's duty to provide for them; if they are incapacitated only for the particular work in which they are skilled, it is recognised to be the country's duty to train them for such work as they can best perform.

Surely, then, if men are incapacitated by working to maintain the life of the country, the State is under an obligation to care for them also.

If by losing a limb a man can no longer follow his calling the State must train him for another calling which he can follow; if a man's health is threatened, say, by unsuitable indoor work, and he has not the ability to perform any other work, the State must help him to get the necessary ability.

Not only fairness to the worker but the good of the State demands this. It is to the good of the State, not only that every man should work well, but for him to work well it is necessary that he should be well in health. Every man should do the work for which he is best fitted, and every man should be properly recompensed for his work.

To-day the man who lives upon the investments of Capital created by the hard work of his forbears has an altogether better existence than the man who sweeps the streets and clears away the refuse; but the latter is more deserving of a good time,

for he earns his living by his own labour and by the performance of a highly essential service; surely it is a wrong and scandalous thing that this man's standard of life should be poorer than that of a man who has never done a day's work in his life ?

You may say that the road sweeper would not appreciate a higher standard than that which he has at present; probably not, immediately. But given the means and the leisure and the opportunity to acquire a finer standard he would, in the natural course of things, grow to appreciate and demand it.

Perhaps the greatest of the tragedies which have existed under the governments of the past is the tragedy of the men who, though fit and anxious to work, can get no employment. From the outcry which has arisen on this subject since the armistice one would almost be led to believe that this evil is one which has existed only since the war, but if you sought to track down its history you would be taken back a very long way indeed.

To-day the capitalists of the land are very eloquent about the right to work, and because certain Trade Unions refuse permission for discharged soldiers to enter particular trades, with all the indignation of a new-found virtue they accuse Labour of refusing the right to work to the men who have fought for their country.

Every one who has taken the trouble to look at the facts knows the injustice of this assertion. The Industrial history of the country provides plenty of evidence to justify the workers going warily in the matter of absorbing unskilled adults into their industries. Unemployment in the past has been the joy of the employer's heart, for it has meant cheap labour, and but for the strength of Trade

Unionism it would mean exactly the same to-day in every industry in the land.

The Amalgamated Society of Engineers is roundly abused for not supporting the training of disabled men for the engineering and metal trades, and at the same time the *Labour Gazette*, an official publication, shows that the number of ex-service men receiving the unemployment pay as engineering and foundry workers is between thirty-two and thirty-three thousand.

What, then, is the explanation of this demand for the acceptance of new and untrained labour in this particular trade? The answer is provided by no less an authority than the Minister of Labour: 'A substantial number of women and girl substitutes who replaced men joining H.M. Forces were being retained, *mainly on account of the lower wages required*.'

It is not the right to work which is exercising the minds of the capitalists—it is the right to get cheap labour, and this is one of the great 'rights' of the past which will be brought to a very unceremonious end when Labour comes into power.

The right to rest, no less than the right to work, is of the greatest importance to a country whose high place among the nations of the world is largely dependent upon the individuality and independence of its people. The Government that passed the Old Age Pensions Act was mightily proud of its achievement, but if you consider what that achievement really was you will find that it amounted to very little indeed. The Old Age Pensions Act was an act of mercy and was on much the same level as would be the foundation by a benevolent old lady of a fund for worn-out cab horses.

Labour supported this measure in the House of

Commons, not because it viewed the Bill as the last word in progressive legislation, but because it was the best that could be looked for at the moment.

Labour takes a rather larger view of the right to rest than can be encompassed in the grant of an Old Age Pension of a few shillings a week at the age of seventy.

Rest is something more than vegetation; there is no rest about lying in bed when one is too worn out to get up; there is but little rest to be gained by sitting in the sun when one is so eaten up with old age and rheumatism that one has not the strength to stir from the doorstep.

The right to rest, as Labour views it, means the right to a few years freedom from toil while the brain and body are still young enough to take an interest in life.

Most people at the age of seventy are close upon decrepitude—even at sixty they are keenly conscious of the burden of their years. But if their labour had been rightly adjusted, as it will be in the future; if throughout their lives their working hours had been reasonably short and their hours of leisure reasonably long; if their wages had been more than sufficient for the bare means of subsistence; if their homes and workshops had been constructed more with a view to maintaining life at its highest level than of merely housing life, the average man of seventy would be at least as young as the man of sixty. Let him begin to draw his pension at sixty, and he would be able to look forward, with as much certainty as one can anticipate anything in this life, to fifteen years or so of happy activity.

What pension a man should be given at the age

of sixty is dependent on the economic conditions of the country. If every one works, the wealth of the nation—individually and collectively—will be greater and living will be cheaper. Proper wages and work for all will relieve the country of the burden of pauperism, and the limitation of interest on capital will save the country from the burden of millionaires. Therefore, even if the pensions granted by a Labour Government were no greater than those given to-day, it may be assumed that their value would be considerably more.

When the Old Age Pensions Bill was first brought before Parliament, there were many people who decried it on the grounds that it would encourage thriftlessness. It was pointed out that, with the assurance of a pension in their old age, people would no longer scheme and scrape for the days when they would be able to work no more.

This horror of people spending, instead of saving, the little money which they earn is one of the pet themes of many self-styled reformers. Saving, in so far as it teaches self-restraint and encourages unselfishness, is undoubtedly a good thing, but there is also much to be said for teaching people to spend wisely, and greater benefits are to be won by wise spending than have ever been gained by the careful hoarding of every penny not needed for actual subsistence.

It is an altogether good thing that people should be enabled to spend without the fear of suffering penurious old age as a consequence, and it is within the power of the State to make wise spending a more enjoyable and profitable thing than unwise spending.

When Labour rules, the right to rest will no

longer be an empty and ironic phrase; it will no longer mean merely the privilege to sit a moment in the sun before descending into the grave—it will be a right well worth the having, and it will be attained while there is still sufficient life and energy left to enjoy it to the full.

CHAPTER III

TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

In considering the coming establishment of a Labour Government it is of the greatest importance to bear in mind the growth and vicissitudes of the Labour Movement and the social and industrial conditions under which it originated and grew.

Trade Unionism—and it is upon Trade Unionism that the Labour Movement has its basis—can look back upon a long history and from its early days of a couple of centuries ago its story is one of bitter struggle; it has had to fight tyrannical oppression, intimidation, ignorance, selfishness, greed, apathy, the coward fear of vested interests, the suspicions of plutocracy—all these things have been ranged against it and it is in the face of these that it has gradually grown to be the power that it is to-day. Naturally, the latter years of its growth have been the speediest, and the last twenty years have proved the efficacy of the solid spade-work performed by the pioneers.

To-day the Trade Union Movement is composed of six and a half million organised men and women and their number is daily growing—its ranks are being swelled by the black-coated community, who are coming to realise that the task of wielding the pen is no less one of the tasks of labour than wielding the pick-axe; who have learnt that, whatever delusions their fathers may have suffered from, they are less kin to the lord of the manor

than to the toiler who builds the houses and makes the roads.

In addition to this movement of six and a half million workers—a movement which is both industrial and political—there is a co-operative movement definitely allied to Labour, having a membership of three and a half million men and women, and a revenue of about one hundred million pounds a year.

There are people who seem to imagine that the Labour Movement is a growth that has sprung up in the night ; an unsophisticated, inexperienced body full of youthful ambitions with nothing to support them; a body which shows a certain amount of presumption in even so much as thinking of the day when it will be called upon to take charge of the affairs of the country. Others, people who have not the excuse of ignorance to support them, people who by virtue of heredity rule the country, and who have but little faith in anything but heredity, anxiously proclaim that Labour is not fit to rule and they draw a picture of it as a rapacious monster which threatens to bring the country to ruin. One statesman, whose sense of responsibility should have saved him from such an exhibition of insincere foolishness, insulted the intelligence of a Cambridge University audience by declaring that the policy of the Labour Party was not merely to make people equal but to keep them equal. This same gentleman, whose rash exploits and wild statements have on more than one occasion been a source of embarrassment to the Government of which he is a member, declared to another audience that the Labour Party would shatter the reviving prosperity of the country and cast away the Empire which

British genius had built up; furthermore, he has made the absurd and ignorant assertion that the Labour Party does not represent one-fifth part of labour.

Despite all these wild and alarming statements, the fact remains that Labour forms the second largest party in the State; its history proves that it is not the inexperienced stripling some people would have us believe, and demonstrates that it possesses as great a sense of responsibility as any body of men which has ever claimed the right and ability to administer the affairs of the nation.

Let us take a brief survey of the history of this movement which will to-morrow be at the helm of the country's affairs. The common lot of the vast majority of the workers in the early days of Trade Unionism was one of persecution and repression; the workers were completely under the heels of the employing classes, and their efforts towards emancipation were met by petitions to Parliament in ever-increasing numbers from the employers complaining of the existence of combinations amongst the workers; the workers, on the other hand, sought the sympathies of Parliament by petitioning against the employer's habit of beating down wages. The Government, after a good deal of wavering over the matter, came down upon the employers' side of the fence, and the workers, their patience exhausted by useless petitioning, adopted, with ever-increasing frequency, the only method of defence which was left to them—the strike weapon. A strike is always a last resort—a desperate measure for the gaining of justice, and these strikes were often accompanied by still more desperate acts of violence which frequently culminated in riots, incendiarism, and

machine breaking. Lancashire magistrates of this period declared that the sole cause of the riots was the new machines employed in cotton manufacture—an excellent example of the shortsightedness of the employers. The introduction of new machinery was undoubtedly an aggravation of the existing state of affairs and was undoubtedly looked upon by many of the workers as an evidence of worse times to come, but to describe it as being the sole cause of the troubles was utterly absurd.

The law forbidding the combination of workers was repealed in 1824, but the employers found it easy to circumvent the benefits which this greater freedom should have brought, and, furthermore, so prosperous had become the manufacturers, and so plentiful had become the stocks produced by the workers, that industry came almost to a standstill, and all efforts to stem the general fall of wages, low enough in all conscience already, proved ineffectual.

The condition of the lives of the people at this period was indeed appalling, and the power of the employers, despite the relief gained by the repeal of the Combination Laws, viewed in the light of to-day, was incredible.

Piece workers and day workers were so continually subjected to reduced prices and wages that they were never certain how much or how little they would receive at the end of each week; and George Jacob Holyoake, that ardent advocate of co-operation and social reform, has recorded how a Birmingham mill owner was one day astonished by the appearance of a 'new' hand who turned up at his work in a well-fitting and handsome suit of clothes. This employer was very much shocked by the spectacle and at once

concluded that he had offered the man too high a wage, and he forthwith proposed that it should be reduced. The only remarkable thing about such an occurrence in those days was that the worker should have a decent suit of clothes. If a workman by some miraculous means succeeded in saving a little money he was lacking in wisdom if he allowed it to become known; if he could afford to dress in clean and decent clothes he was afraid to do so lest, as in the case I have quoted, the wages should be lowered—but there were not many in danger of a decreased income from this cause. Capital held unrestricted sway during this period, and as a result the greater part of the country was reduced to an appalling state; not only were wages bad, and housing conditions worse, but the women and children of the industrial centres were living under conditions as bad as any suffered by slaves in the whole of recorded history. The wages of the men reduced to the lowest conceivable rate, it became necessary that if any life were to be retained by their families, the women and children would have to work. If you refer to the history of this time you will find recorded how children of both sexes worked together in the mines, often for sixteen hours a day, and how women, even when pregnant, laboured for long hours underground, and how these women were back again at work within a week of their children's birth. Some of these women stood knee-deep in water throughout the day, whilst other women, and children of tender age, with a girdle round their waist and a chain between their legs, crawling on all fours, drew carts of coal along the passages of the mines.

The cotton mills have an equally bad record;

there also women and young children were employed under disgraceful conditions. The children were 'apprenticed'—that was the polite formula employed in this great anti-slavery country. The workhouses of the land were found to be a valuable source of supply, and the mill-owners found it a highly advantageous thing to keep in close touch with the overseers of the poor. These poor little defenceless children were worked for as many as sixteen hours a day—sometimes doing day shifts, sometimes night shifts. They lived, or were housed—to say they were stabled would suggest a state of well-being they did not possess—in wretched enclosed buildings adjoining the factories in which they slaved, and the beds in which they slept were said never to become cold, for as one batch rested the other batch went to the loom, only half the requisite number of beds were used—a fine piece of economy this. The cheapest and coarsest of foods were given to these children, and often there was no discrimination of the sexes, with the result that disease, misery, and vice were rampant, as can well be imagined.

Lord Shaftesbury, speaking in the House of Lords in 1873, gave a picture of the conditions which prevailed at the time of which I am writing; he described how he waited at the factory gates to see the children come out—a set of sad, dejected, cadaverous creatures. In Bradford, he said, the proofs of long and cruel toil were most remarkable. 'The crippled and distorted forms might be numbered by hundreds, perhaps thousands. They seemed to me, such was their crooked shapes, like a mass of crooked alphabets.'

Had the Lancashire magistrates been correct in their inference that the sole cause of riots was

the new machines there would not, I think, have been much to wonder at.

In 1819 the Cotton Mills Act was passed, limiting the age at which children might work in factories, and also reducing the time of their labours to seventy-two hours a week; and it was not until some years later that these hours were further reduced to sixty-nine per week. Legislation was passed in 1833 making forty-eight hours the maximum for children and sixty-nine for young persons, whilst night work for children under eighteen was altogether prohibited. Furthermore, provision was made for daily school attendance. It was not until 1840 that the first mining act prohibiting underground work by women and boys under ten years of age was passed, and a further four years elapsed before child labour was reduced to six and a half hours a day.

Throughout this dreadful period drunkenness was general, and the men were said to die off like rotten sheep. Each generation, it was stated, was commonly extinct by the age of fifty.

Following the repeal of the Combination Laws, Robert Owen started the Grand National Consolidated Trades' Union, which in a few months gained a membership of half a million, but this had to be disbanded, for not only private employers but even the Government itself in its workshops compelled the workers to resign all connection with the Unions and to sign the 'Document' to that effect. Trades Unionists were prosecuted in great numbers under the Master and Servants Act, and were often summarily arrested and condemned upon a mere complaint of misbehaviour lodged by the employer. The military were employed in suppressing strike riots, and punishment was

meted out to men whose sole offence lay in announcing a strike or acting as a delegate to it. Even up to 1869 the agreement to strike and the announcement by placards of a strike was frequently punished as intimidation, and it was not until 1875, when the Master and Servant Act was repealed, that peaceful picketing was permitted and 'violence and intimidation' became a matter of common law.

All these efforts to kill Trades Unionism lamentably failed and the Movement steadily grew, so that by 1902 it had a membership of about one million five hundred thousand workers. Three years before this the Trades Union Congress resolved upon the establishment upon a Joint Committee of Trade Union and Socialist bodies, with the purpose of promoting direct representation in Parliament.

Fifteen candidates went to the polls in 1901, but only two of them—Keir Hardie and Richard Bell—were elected. In this same year, however, the Labour Movement received great impetus from a decision given by the House of Lords in relation to the Taff Vale strike. In this judgment the Lords threw down the belief that the Act of 1871 afforded absolute protection to Trade Unionists in their collective capacity, and ruled that a Union could be sued in its collective capacity for a tortuous act committed by any one of its officials or members, and this aroused so much indignation that in the election of 1906 no fewer than twenty-nine candidates of the Labour Representation Committee were returned to Parliament, and in 1910 the accession of the miners increased the number of the Labour members to forty.

If we examine the legislation of the past fourteen or fifteen years we shall find that the laws passed for the betterment of the social and industrial conditions of the people synchronise in a remarkable manner with the growing political strength of the people. In 1906 the Workmen's Compensation Act was passed—an Act which in many respects marked a considerable improvement upon earlier legislation of this character. Hitherto accidents which did not happen on or near the employer's premises were ruled out, and illness and death due exclusively to certain trade diseases were untouched; furthermore, the Act of 1906 made compensation payable in the case of death or serious and permanent disablement, even when the accident could not be attributed to the wilful and serious misconduct of the workman concerned.

Next, in 1908, came the Old Age Pensions Act, the provisions of which every one is acquainted with. Good as this measure was, it by no means represented the high-water mark of Labour's aims in this respect. At the time this Act was passed efforts were made by the Labour Party to reduce the age of pensioners to sixty-five and to make the income limit higher. Labour members of the House of Commons also made a very great attempt to obtain the removal of a particularly uncalled for clause disqualifying any person who had, even if only on one occasion, been in receipt of Poor Law relief; this unhappy blemish was removed three years later, but it is a very notable fact that before the Government's measure became law nearly one million veterans of the Labour movement were enjoying free pensions to the amount of £11,000,000 per year, and more than

nine in ten were in receipt of the full pension of five shillings a week.

One of the most important movements towards the creation of a better state of affairs in Industrial England was the formation of a Royal Commission on Poor Laws and Relief of Distress, and as another evidence of the progress of the Labour Movement, it may be recalled that Labour was well represented on the Commission. Poverty is such an enormous evil, and is the source of so many other great social evils, that it is astounding it should have been allowed to drift so long under a relief administration which experience has proved to have nothing to recommend it, and which utterly failed to solve the problem of the poor. For over eighty years the only important change made in the organisation of Poor Law Relief was the absorption of the Poor Law Commissioners, in 1871, by the Local Government Board, thus bringing the system under the responsibility of the Government. The faults of our Poor Law administration were many, and some of them were disgraceful, but the greatest criticism which can be made of it is that it failed—and failed very miserably—to put an end to pauperism. Twenty years ago there were 735,388 paupers in England and Wales; ten years ago their number had grown to 916,377. In England and Wales, in 1911, the deaths registered as having taken place in Poor Law institutions, workhouses, infirmaries, schools, hospitals, and asylums, numbered 106,642, or 20.11 per cent. of the total deaths; the proportion during the ten years immediately preceding averaged 17.88 per cent., and of these 55,570 occurred in workhouses, 38,899 in hospitals, and 10,636 in lunatic asylums. In London, in

1911, four persons in every ten died in the workhouse, hospital, or lunatic asylum.

The Commission to consider the Poor Law emphatically condemned the methods hitherto adopted of dealing with the poor, and in particular condemned the system of relief work which was employed. The Commission's investigations clearly showed the uselessness and folly of treating unemployment as an unforeseen emergency instead of a normal and recurring incident in undustrial life.

One of the recommendations of this Commission was the establishment—since achieved—of Labour Exchanges. Labour Bureaux have existed in this country for upwards of twenty years, but for the most part their work has been in connection with the relief of distress. The Unemployed Workman Act of 1905 gave the power to establish Labour Exchanges, but only one body in England, the Central (Unemployed) Body for London, made any great use of it. This body established a system of Metropolitan Employment Exchanges, and when the Labour Exchanges Act came into force it had a list of twenty offices, and during the preceding twelve months had filled 30,580 vacancies for employment. The Unemployed Workman Act expressly required that wherever a Distress Committee was not establishcd the Council of every County and County Borough should appoint a special Committee to investigate the conditions of the Labour market by means of Labour Exchanges, and to establish or assist such Exchanges within its own area. As was pointed out in the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, such a network of Labour Exchanges, covering the whole kingdom, would have afforded,

as the experience of the Metropolitan Exchanges demonstrated, valuable information both to unemployed workmen and to local authorities dealing with the problem. Unfortunately, this provision of the Act was ignored by the Local Government Boards, and was, with the exception of London and three places in Scotland, not put into operation.

Other legislation, such as Health Insurance and Unemployment Insurance, are so much within the round of our daily life that to record its achievement is unnecessary, but it would be well to observe where Labour stands to-day when the legislation in its interest has come to occupy so important a part of parliamentary time.

Twenty-one years ago a General Federation of Trade Unions was established with the object of combining the various separate Unions into one army capable of concerted action, and possessing a gigantic central fund which would be at the service of any individual Union fighting to maintain its existence or to improve its condition. There are now over one hundred and thirteen different Unions. Amongst the largest of these Federations are the General Federation of Trade Unions, the Miner's Federation of Great Britain, Railwaymen's Societies, the Transport Workers' Federation, and the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades. The strength which Labour gains by uniting its forces in federations is obvious, but a still further advance in securing the solidarity of the workers has been made by the formation of what is known as The Triple Alliance, composed of Miners', Railwaymen's, and Transport Workers' confederations. The existence of such a colossal organisation as this makes possible a national strike

by which the whole life of the country could be brought to a standstill. This is not a weapon which Labour would lightly use—as was demonstrated by the Trades Union Congress which negatived a proposal for direct action—but the power to use it as a last resource is an invaluable lever in compelling every effort being made towards the settlement of disputes.

As an outcome of the great railway dispute of 1919, a special board, on which railway workers have equal representation with railway managers, was set up to deal with conditions of service. This arrangement made between the Government and the Railwaymen's Unions marked the first step towards Labour's control of industry. Another recognition of Labour's strength to enforce its just claims was the establishment a few years ago of the Joint Industrial Councils—the outcome of the recommendations of a Committee which was appointed to consider the question of securing a permanent improvement in the relations between employers and workmen. The excellence of the work performed by these Councils is evidenced by the steady growth of their number.

This is intentionally but a brief and scanty outline of the progress which has been made by the Labour Movement, but it is sufficient, I think, to serve its purpose, which is to indicate how very clear the evidence is that Labour has reached that stage in its development which justifies it in the belief that it is fit to rule; its history shows the hard-earned experience it has had; its attitude towards the world problems with which the country is faced, and which are crying out for solution, shows how it has profited by that experience, and its conduct of its private affairs gives ample proof

of its possession of a well balanced and statesman-like mind.

Not only is Labour fit to govern, but the needs of the country demand that it shall govern. The country stands to-day at the entrance-gate of a new era; the old panaceas are generally recognised as being out-of-date and useless; the old political parties show themselves to be eaten up by the moth of precedence; they are empty of ideas yet they still try to trumpet forth resounding phrases, though timid in their actions, and fearful to follow the lead of their own words. If ever in the country's history opportunity knocked at the door, it is doing so to-day. The Labour Party is ready, and willing and able to open the door, and the Labour Party is the only party which is prepared to throw the door wide and lead the way into an Era of progress and sanity.

CHAPTER IV

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE CONSTITUTION

MANY people when they face the prospect of a Labour Government coming into power, immediately become possessed of all manner of fearful forebodings about the Constitution; they see the King sharing the fate of the Czar of Russia; they see a sort of South American Republic set up with a bewildering succession of Opportunists as its Presidents; they see a Cabinet under the thumb of a powerful coterie of Trade Unionists outside the House; and they see the country speedily going to wrack and ruin, as it undoubtedly would do under such impossible conditions.

Happily, none of these forebodings is justified.

Take, first, the question of the Monarchy—a question of the highest importance not only to Great Britain, but to the whole of the British Empire. There can be no question among thoughtful people that the monarchy plays a large part in holding the British Empire together; loyalty to the King both at home and in the Dominions is more a religious than a political attitude, and it would require a very unwise monarch to change this faith in the hearts of the people.

Our present King has proved himself during many political crises, to be an essentially constitutional monarch, and I have no hesitation in saying that while such an attitude is adopted by the King,

the question of Republic versus Monarchy will not arise.

If any evidence of this were required, it could be found in the unique position occupied by the heir to the Throne—the Prince of Wales—during his tour of the Empire. It would be true to say that there has been no factor which has contributed more to the unity of the Empire than the Prince of Wales's visit to the Dominions, and this, let it be noted, immediately following the great war, which very naturally left considerable suffering and disappointment in many lands.

I have met many people who were present at some of the colonial receptions to the Prince, and the universal opinion is that he has, by his clean bearing and unassuming manner, won the hearts of all. Not only has the Prince been a unifying factor to the Empire as a whole, but he has made himself more popular than ever at home.

In many respects the workers are even more conservative than the Conservatives, and in none are their views more steadfastly established than on this question of the head of the State; and, notwithstanding heated controversies on almost every subject under the sun, no question of Republicanism as a serious proposition ever finds a place in Labour discussions.

I would say, therefore, that while the King recognises, as he does, that the navvy of to-day may be the Prime Minister of to-morrow, and that no question either of birth or social power is involved in the occupancy of high offices of State, the least of all the difficulties facing a Labour Government would be that of the Crown.

It is very easy to be misled by definitions, and nothing could be more false than an assertion that

Republicanism is necessarily synonymous with democracy. Take, for example, America. All the evidence goes to show that the American Republic can be, and, indeed, has been, more autocratic than our own monarchical Government would dare to be, and in time of war the power of the American Republic has amounted almost to a danger to its people.

Whilst, however, Labour recognises the wisdom of having an hereditary monarch, it is not prepared for a moment to countenance an hereditary upper Chamber, and there is obviously nothing contradictory in this attitude.

A king, whilst possessing hereditary privileges, also has hereditary duties, and if he fails to perform them he can be brought to book. The responsibilities of a king cannot be burked without serious consequences, but a peer may be as irresponsible as he pleases, and whilst he himself may not suffer, the chances are that every one else will.

A king of England to-day holds a skilled and responsible position, and what he may lack in the way of personal endowments is largely compensated for by a strict and severe training; furthermore, a king is surrounded by skilled and well-qualified advisers.

A peer, on the other hand, may be entirely lacking in all training and may be remarkable for his lack of natural endowments; he may be dissipated and utterly selfish and irresponsible. Clearly, then, it is the height of unwisdom that he should be permitted to have any hand in the framing of the laws of the country or in the vetoing of measures which he has not the wisdom to understand.

There are, I know, some people who imagine

that the House of Lords represents aristocracy of brains as well as aristocracy of birth, but up to the present I have failed to discover any evidence of the truth of this.

The futility of the House of Lords, however, is recognised even by the people who from time to time find it expedient to add to its membership, and the question of the reform of the Lords has long been before the country.

There can be no doubt whatever that many of the troubles that have arisen in the House of Lords have been of the Peers' own seeking. The controversies which arose during the first Lloyd George Budget and during the discussions of the Home Rule Bill gave rise in a very definite form to the whole question of the Second Chamber; it is, however, a curious and ironic fact that during many stages of the war the real guardians of the people's liberties were to be found in the Upper House.

I am frankly prepared to admit that there are very natural differences of opinion in the Labour movement regarding the value of a Second Chamber, but there is complete unanimity in Labour's assertion that all hereditary influence must be wiped out; and this objection to heredity, it may be pointed out, is not solely confined to the Labour Party. Lord Astor felt so keenly on the subject that a Bill was promoted to relieve him of the necessity of being compelled to take a title and exercise an hereditary right which he himself felt he was not fitted for.

I, personally, favour a Second Chamber, but I am firmly convinced that it should be elected by the people. There are two methods by which it could be formed ; it could be a small body elected

on a large geographical basis, or it could be a body chosen from the House of Commons, and containing proportionate representation of the political parties returned to the Lower Chamber.

By this means we should get over the absurd position of having, during the same period, an Upper House of one political complexion and a Lower House of another. As is the case at present, the Second Chamber's powers would be limited, and any measure passed by the Commons three successive times would become law.

I do not think an Upper Chamber should have more than three hundred members, and, unquestionably, it should be dissolved concurrently with the Lower House, thus ensuring that Parliament in its entirety is as representative as possible of the wishes of the country.

With the disbandment of the Peers the spiritual lords would also go, but the abolition of the spiritual and hereditary right to govern should not, of necessity, in any way rob the country of ability, for I see no reason why peers and bishops (not to mention priests, who are now excluded from Parliament) should not be permitted to submit themselves for election.

The possible relationship between a Labour Cabinet and Trade Unionism is a source of great perturbation to many people, who frequently urge that the Cabinet Ministers would be mere delegates from their Unions. Nothing could be more grotesque than this theory, and no Cabinet which put it into practice could exist a session; indeed, the position would be so Gilbertian that it is difficult to conceive any one seriously picturing a Minister holding high office and making important decisions affecting the welfare of the whole nation, with one

eye on the particular interests of a particular union all the time. It is a fundamental law that the Government is responsible to the country as a whole, and not to one particular section of it; that no section of the people is so important as the people as a whole. Labour recognises this law and, I am persuaded, will be more disposed to live up to it than some of the Governments of the past which have devoted most of their time and energy to the safeguarding of vested interests, altogether ignoring the rights of the great mass of the people.

CHAPTER V

NATIONALISATION

An economist of repute has asserted that the whole of the necessary work of the world could be accomplished if every one worked for four hours each day.

That may or may not be true, but I fear in the present state of affairs it is not practical politics. For one thing, there are so many drones, men and women who are, that is, non-productive, persons who live on invested capital which is made lucrative, not by any of their own endeavours, but because labour makes it show a return.

It may very well be that when capital as well as labour is all under the control of the community four hours will suffice for the complete carrying out of the world's work, but at present we must look to fewer hours of leisure, desirable as the utmost in this respect is. Leisure means improvement both in education and in health. I, for one, am convinced from long and intimate association with the working classes, that if they had more spare time they would be the most ready to seek self-improvement. And that must be for the general uplift of life as a whole.

If you doubt that assertion—and one knows that a proportion of the employing class does not believe that the average worker wants fewer hours of work for any reason other than personal laziness and casual enjoyment—you have only to go to

some of the big centres of industry and ask the librarian or the ordinary bookseller, and he will tell you the sort of book the artisan of to-day is reading.

He is not reading the latest novel by the popular writers—these are being consumed by the flapper and the young boys, the idle well-to-do, and the lesser intellects of Suburbia. The working man, more than at any other time in the history of the country, is reading that type of book which brings him knowledge and improvement; the works of the scientist, the philosopher, the historian, the publicist, the technical expert.

Publishers, with their fingers on the pulse of the reading public, are realising this, and several of the big houses, to my own knowledge, are making special efforts to set before the worker libraries of books on economics and social development. This is a sign of the times, and redounds to the credit of the artisan more than anything I can write in eulogy of him.

He must have leisure. We of the Labour Party, who expect in the course of time to rule this England of ours, mean that he shall have it, that leisure shall no longer be the privilege of the rich, who often know how to use it but poorly. It must belong to the worker too.

A forty-hour week is in the realm of practical politics. This will be accomplished as soon as Labour comes into its own, as soon as the profits of industry do not accumulate in the pockets of the few, but are spread out into the possession of the whole.

It may not come immediately. The times are far from normal. We have to make special efforts just now to produce. But we shall reach a new

normality in the end, and in the meantime we shall demand what consideration can be made with justice.

It is objected that if the labour movement promotes higher wages much or any further we shall not be able as a nation to hold our own in the race with the other nations of the world. 'See,' these people say, 'how Belgium is working, regardless of times, and they are coming back faster than any other country in Europe. And see, too, how the United States are capturing the markets. It is their immense production. What is the British working man doing?' And they answer with a disgusted wave of the hand, 'Putting up wages, striking for fewer hours of work.'

It is not that the worker works too little, it is that the proceeds of his work go into the hands of the capitalists, and not into his own. On the face of it how can such a state of things be fair? Why should a man who, by the accident of birth, owns half a county derive vast sums of money from the labour that works the land or the mines that happen to be found on that land?

What has he done to deserve this freedom from toil and this immense luxury and comfort of existence?

The land, of course, should belong to the whole community.

And that brings us to nationalisation.

This is one of the chief planks in the Labour platform.

When Labour rules, land, the mines, the railways, canals, shipping, probably also, through the municipalities, the supply of milk and bread—these essentials must all be under the absolute direction of the State.

Curiously enough the Labour Party has recently been engaged in fighting control. But there is a world of difference in the principles underlying that sort of control the war gave us, also as it exists to-day in certain forms, and national ownership. The war control has often enough only kept up prices, and instead of serving the customer, which means the public, has merely put unnecessarily large profits into the pockets of a number of individual traders.

You will remember the problem of the mines. It was not merely that the miner had a little more adequate payment for the dangerous and valuable work he does for the country, that sent the price of coal up to its alarming heights. It was the diverse and often wasteful management making certain pits show small returns that provoked the authorities to raise the price. This made the balance sheets of the bad mines respectable, and it made the profits of the successful mines look the finest example of profiteering that the world could show. That is not the type of control we want.

And protection will not do—not for us. We have seen some results of this during the war. You cannot prosper by building brick walls round factories, or seeking to prevent other competitors building factories. Let us have all the world can show of energy and production. That is at the moment the only way to wipe out shortages that exist, and in the normal times it is the royal road to the minimum of both hours of work and low prices.

The very meaning of Protection is higher charges to the purchaser. Bring it down to a simple illustration. Messrs A. make boots. They

buy enough leather to make a pair of boots for half a crown. The finished article has cost them, shall we say, ten shillings. If such were the facts —and my figures are purposely fictitious—those boots would cost twelve-and-six in a shop.

Messrs B. make boots. The leather to them for a pair costs five shillings. That means the pair in the shop must cost half a crown more. Unless, that is, the saving is made on labour and that we are not disposed to tolerate.

But does the pair of boots Messrs A. produce sell at twelve-and-six ? No, nothing under fourteen shillings, because even at that they are just under the fifteen shillings of Messrs B.

That's the result of Protection—enlarged profits to the protected, higher prices to the purchaser. Free-trade, free competition, the law of supply and demand, with a just wage and a fair profit—these are the incidents of our policy.

Nationalisation will not put vast profits into private individuals' pockets. It will do just the opposite. It will decrease the cost of the commodity to every one, it will leave allowance for a system of wages in advance of those appertaining to-day, and even then a margin which will go into the national exchequer and thus relieve taxation.

There are two forms of objection to the change.

The one, of course, comes from the interested capitalists. It is, I suppose, human nature that the man who inherits a mine doesn't want to hand it over to any one, even though it be for the good of the community. He wants to do no work, but go on drawing his royalties until the end of his days—and even then he'll object to the idea that his estate should be mulcted in heavy death duties ! The man whose money has been put into the mine

will have similar objections, and even though he be bought out, he knows very well that he will, under Labour government at all events, find himself heavily taxed, possibly by a capital levy.

The second objection is the cynical one that the moment you put anything under the civil services you get uninterested work, and laxity of endeavour. Initiative dies, a man does little more than sufficient to hold down his job.

I call this cynical because it is an easily spoken libel on the average Englishman. That it should so generally be believed in to-day passes one's understanding. Have these men forgotten the straining patriotism that set every muscle and brain in this country working at its best the moment the war came? I don't want to write heroics upon a subject that really is one of economics, in order to refute the libel that there are not men and women in England who will work for the common good, not with the mere hope of great rewards (though these will be sufficient and good) but to service their fellows.

I hold a brief here for all classes. Not only the manual workers. In the new civil services that will be set up to run these industries, we shall find the middle classes, the able and industrious among them, doing their best and not their least, in those positions of control that will inevitably arise.

For the Labour Government will by no means stand for the manual labourer only. It will not legislate for only one section of the population, and so set up a new class warfare, and while I intend to have something to say about the middle classes later, it is fitting here to say that I have every faith that men will readily be found who will act on behalf of the Government owners in

successfully and skilfully carrying out those duties which fall outside the actual manual labour.

The Labour Party to-day embraces both those who work by hand and brain. And the brain worker will have the same sympathy shown to him in the matter of salary, of leisure, and of advancement, as we are fighting for on behalf of the manual worker. There must be an ultimate minimum for all, the level of subsistence, and over that every one should have time and opportunity to progress. And in this connection it may well be that Labour will, in fixing hours of toil, see to it that the man whose job is unpleasant or particularly dangerous shall work shorter hours than he whose ways are cast in happier circumstances. That would give, say, the man who cleans the sewers, all the more time for self-improvement, and the opportunity to raise himself a rung or two on the social ladder.

If we can create these conditions we shall obliterate the strike.

Transport must, of course, be nationally controlled. It is as obvious as that private enterprise should not run the roads of the country. The community, and not private companies, ought to own the canals and the railways, and the shipping upon which this country depends so largely. The Government would then have its hand upon all freights, and the public would gain enormously in cheaper commodities of all kinds.

Private commercial undertakings would benefit in the same ratio. Let the nation get its own coal, carry it upon its own railways, barges, motor-lorries, and distribute it through the municipalities. Let the Government ships convey it to the markets of the world—every exporter, of course, being in

the Government service. Let the electric light, power and heat be communal, and enormous savings will be realised. Prices will not fluctuate, and supplies will be less likely to be held up, as they have been on occasion when the private companies have been pleased to resort to this method of enforcing their own terms on the public.

And what of those trades outside the essentials which the Government under Labour will control ?

In the first place we shall fix the profits that can be earned at the factory, and at all the other stages before the goods get to the purchaser. There will be no profiteering. We shall be the purchasers of raw material and shall ration it to the trades concerned. Of those trades the workers will share with the present ownership the work of management. This should make for the lowest possible prices to the householder, and here women voters must look to the Labour movement to bring relief to the many items in her difficult exchequer which now cause it a struggle to make ends meet. Subsidies will not be necessary to keep the breakfast-table fixed permanently at a reasonable cost; all that is necessary is wise control and no excess profits.

This is not a class measure, aimed solely to benefit working men's households. All sections of the population will reap the same advantage and I know it will be as acceptable to the clerk and the small-salaried professional man as to the artisan.

CHAPTER VI

LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE MIDDLE CLASSES

It is a fact that the idea of Labour being ever in control of the country is looked upon with suspicion by that vast body known as the middle classes.

These are the people who have thought little through many generations of the struggle of the labourer for a decent hire. They have been obsessed with their own occupations, and have had but a vague idea of the workers as the 'lower classes' to be used and, more or less, kept in their place. The 'upper classes' have fostered this notion, and in the main have sympathised with either the lower or the middle masses as such only in so far as passing charity carried them.

Others have seldom gone deeply into the conditions of life as lived by the workman, have known nothing of the slums, or of pit work, save what they have casually read in their daily papers. To the majority of them the struggle of the worker even in recent times has been evidenced chiefly by an occasional strike. And then, naturally enough, these people have been ready to criticise, because a strike of any size invariably means discomfort to them and often worse.

They see some commodity cut off, prices mount, or (it has been known!) some such public service as the railways have closed down, and in that last case, where the rich man can stay at home or motor, the middle class man, having to get to his business,

is put to the height of inconvenience. And he swears.

To-day he is being largely left in the race. He is ground between the upper and the nether millstones. He is even learning to organise and follow in the very steps the manual labourer has shown him.

We must remember that the middle class man of to-day is entirely different from what he was a generation or two ago. When the governing class was the land-owning class the middle man was as much bottom dog in their eyes as any one. Those that grew above that level really might have been included among the capitalists.

To-day you have a much larger membership of that class which falls between the millstones of the capitalist and the organised manual labourer. This class has no trades union, no organisation, is invariably the victim of industrial disputes. Whoever is responsible for such upheavals, the middle class man is always the victim, the man with a fixed income, who has to maintain a certain standard of respectability because of his avocation or profession, who has to clothe himself well, who spends more than the worker on the education of his children. Between the capitalist and the trades union he is crushed. This man's position is a real hardship.

In the same category you have the middle class man who has retired on a fixed income, who, in the pre-war days with pre-war prices (largely made possible because then the work of the world was done too cheaply), lived in genuine comfort, if not in any particular excess of luxury. He had no cause to stint himself, could buy his own house, play tennis, golf, often run his own car.

This man has been most adversely affected by increases in the cost of living and taxation that have followed in the wake of war. He is having a bad time because he is the man above all others who has not shared in the inflation of values. His old two hundred and fifty a year is still two hundred and fifty in figures, but that, of course, means that it is only a little over the hundred now, so far as purchasing power goes. Everything he wants costs him more, and now, on the top of increases in food and clothes, his club subscriptions, his rates and taxes, is to be added a large increase in his rent, if by chance he is not the owner, but the tenant, of his house. He sees his little capital threatened, and, too old probably to return to work, the future is ominous.

These classes are the folk I am talking about now—both the middle class at work, whose incomes have not risen nearly in proportion to the cost of living, and the retired, but not rich, man whose income has, in effect, been halved.

To a very large extent in the past this man has been quite contented to let the old world jog on past his garden gate without worrying much about social problems. He has desired no change. He could be relied upon to vote solidly Tory because he was prone to look upon what he called law and order as being entirely safe in the Tory Party's hands.

The War has changed his condition, and it is changing his views. He is waking up. Just at first, true enough, and, I suppose, naturally enough, his early stirrings are evidenced often in a blind disapproval of strikes that hit him; of the departmental 'fools' who let things 'go to the dogs'; and of 'these Bolshevist workers' who

are, in his words, ' overreaching all demands, and ought to be shot.'

These are the extremists, I know. *Moderate* middle class men have seen the increase in wages coming, and, realising the strength of organisation and how they are being left behind in the race, they are proving how hard they have been hit by themselves tending towards organisation and concerted action.

Let these men look into the future and ask themselves under what régime they will benefit most.

The Tory control ?

That is the power and autocracy of government by privilege, and ownership by the chance of birth. Under that régime—fine as some of its elements and personalities have been in the past (it would be very surprising if it were otherwise, seeing the chances these fortunate members of the community have had ; the lavish education, the lack of all anxiety concerning the wherewithal to exist)—the individual will contine to be crippled, not to get the reward of his toil, and the middle class man will more than ever be the victim of the struggle between capital and labour; for, should the old standard of government be maintained, you may be sure this struggle against oppression will be continuous and more bitter than ever before. The men are so much stronger.

The Liberal régime is a possible alternative, but that is better than the Tory only in so far as it is a stepping stone on the way to the fulfilment of the Labour programme.

I want to assert that the only future for the middle class man is under the Labour rule. We welcome him into our ranks. We do not propose

to solicit his support without giving him ours. The Labour Party is not merely brawn under organisation. The brain worker is already in our ranks. Thousands and thousands of our members are not manual workers. Slaves of the pen and the office stool—these are among us, and the lot of these workers will be better under our administration than under any other.

I know very well that many of the middle man's present hardships are the direct result of the War. If Labour rules in Britain and in other countries too, there will be no wars. Internationalism, which means arbitration in council instead of the arbitrament of arms, will displace that sort of 'patriotism' which means: 'We are better than you, and if you don't believe it, take this and this.' We shall hope to talk in consultation and not with howitzers, and in saying this I am not criticising our part in the late War. It was an honourable part, a great part. Any administration that had acted differently from Mr Asquith's in August, 1914, would have stained our name as a people. But we, as a party representing the workers, mean to use all our might against wars, against the mad race in armament which preceded the last upheaval, and which must inevitably sooner or later bring about conflict.

And I want to tell the middle class man that, if we can largely obliterate strikes which hit so disastrously at production and prices, and if we can reduce to absurdity the possibility of great wars, we are, in those two things alone, giving him security and limiting the cost of all commodities.

But more, as I explained in the last chapter, by nationalisation we shall have efficiency in the supply of all essentials; his coal, gas, electric-light, bread,

milk, the charges for transport, will all be under control, and the prices of things will be materially reduced by limiting profits.

There is something beyond all these general considerations. His demands will receive the same support as the worker's demands. It will be realised that there are grades of service, and that the man who works with his brain is entitled to his minimum wage and opportunity for advancement and for leisure just as much as the man who toils with his hands. The middle class union need not be in antagonism with the labour movement; it can be part and parcel of it. Every one who, whether with muscle or with brain, renders any service to the State has interests in common against the selfishness of large private fortune-making.

What has the middle man to fear from us?

Take as an instance the question of income-tax. The Labour Party's policy is based on the principle of ability to pay. That must appeal to the middle class man, because ability to pay must not be determined alone upon income as income, but the liability which that income carries.

Take the £500 to £1000 a year man. In the first place the limit below which no tax is charged will be far higher than at present. Possibly the £500 a year man will pay only on £100, and then at a small rate. Above this figure there must be a margin when taxation will be small. The man with a family to clothe and educate—the number of children will of course be taken into consideration—hasn't much left over for extravagant luxuries, even on £1000 a year. Greater taxes on the greater incomes will suffice to cover the allowances made to this man and his type. Later on we must discuss national finance, but for the

moment our assurance is that the middle class man will benefit considerably in the matter of income-tax. Could it be otherwise in any Labour programme? That programme demands that a higher value be paid upon the workers' commodity—that is, their labour—and how shall it, then, deny to other workers that justice which itself is so earnestly fighting for?

Here's another case that affects him—coal; when such commodities as this are no longer made the medium of a Stock Exchange gamble, the basis of trusts and combines, this voter clearly ought to go for the better course of national service for the public good than for the system which considers the payment of large profits and high dividends.

Ability to pay means more than enough to pay.

For instance, the railwaymen demand a certain scale of wages. These wages must come from somewhere—which means they must be earned—and it may inevitably mean the transferring to the consumer—in this case the user of railways—a burden which he is entitled to say he himself cannot bear. By that means the railwayman may be making a demand by the strength of his organisation that inflicts punishment upon the middle class.

The chief answer to this is that no industry ought to continue to exist that cannot provide a decent standard of existence for all those engaged in it. Labour must of necessity be the first charge on industry, and we have no right to say that a concern shall be run which only provides cheap facilities to the user at the expense of sweated conditions for the producers.

There is a reverse side. It may be conceived

that a business cannot pay, not because it is badly managed, but because demands are made upon it by the workers which make it impossible to carry on successfully.

Many undertakings are saying that to-day, and in the present order of things we have the workers making their demands on the one hand and the employers bartering on the other, and maybe even losing money in carrying on. There is no one to say with authority either to the employers, ' you *can* pay more,' or to the workers, ' you must not expect more, the business does not justify it.'

A Labour Cabinet, taking the place of the slip-shod compromising departments of the present régime, would be invested with power in this respect, and could arbitrate with fairness. It would have the whole weight of the country's workers behind it and possess their confidence, whereas now the Government of to-day has succeeded only in acquiring their suspicions.

There is, of course, to every impartial mind vast room for improvements in the wages and conditions of practically every grade of worker without in any way crippling industry, and only by limiting individual profit-making.

CHAPTER VII

HOUSING AND HEALTH : HEALTH AND HOUSING

THE question of housing has been obscured by a lot of uninformed gossip. At the moment we have to recognise that the conditions are entirely abnormal, but we have also to recognise that there was a considerable shortage of houses before the War. We are all inclined to forget that. Yet it was so.

The census of 1911 showed that one-tenth of the population was living in over-crowded habitations, and in stating that, let me remind my readers that the authorities regard people to be living in overcrowded conditions only when there are more than two persons to a room and that including living rooms. Which, of course, means three or more to a bedroom. If a cottage or tenement consist of two bedrooms and a living room it is regarded as overcrowded only if there are more than six persons occupying that accommodation, and be it added, children under fourteen are counted as halves. This is bringing things down to the minimum, so that when I use the word 'overcrowding' it means really definite unhealthiness and irritating discomfort.

Now this state of affairs was not confined to the towns. It applied equally to the rural parts of the country, and it should be stated that it was not entirely the result of house shortage ; it was

very often the result of the fact that workers had not sufficient to pay for the rent of houses that they needed.

Even then, mark you, the number of rooms I have quoted did not properly represent the position in its true perspective, because thousands of these houses occupied by the working classes were really unfit for human habitation. They were insanitary, dilapidated, dark, damp.

I should like in this connection to quote the reports of the medical officers of two towns and two rural authorities, taken quite at random. They are not examples picked out carefully in order to emphasise my point by taking the worst cases. I will not mention the places, but they are, in my opinion, representative of the majority of localities; one report says :—

'In this town there are probably 40,000 to 50,000 houses built on the back to back principle (and you must know what that means in lack of air and light), most of them in courtyards or in short terraces shut in behind houses facing the street. During 1911, 926 of these houses were condemned as "unfit for human habitation." And how many of the others ought to be classed as unfit? All of them. They are a disgrace to a civilised community. Have you ever visited these courts and alleys in the slums of cities such as Birmingham? There is no light in them, no draught of air. They are stagnant. They are breeding grounds of disease. Put the healthiest of men in them, confined, and in a few years he will weaken. Consumption is rife in these parts, and on the top of this liability to disease there is —or has been—no opportunity to cure such troubles. If by luck a man or child has been

snatched from such surroundings the victim has perforce been sent back again and thus lost all chance of a permanent cure. So disease spreads.'

Now consider the report from a country district :—

'There is in many villages a clamant need for new and better houses, and after these have been erected for the closure of the old insanitary ones' (this, mind you, in 1911, before there was anything heard of a housing shortage), 'certain villages have suffered evident demoralisation as a result of the slow deterioration of the housing conditions of the people.

'In one district—a small one—there were forty-nine cottages inspected last year in which nothing short of pulling down and entirely rebuilding could make them habitable. And besides these things, were discovered forty-four cases of overcrowding—in which cases it was impossible to abate the trouble as there were no other houses available, even if the occupants could have afforded to occupy them. Also a much larger number of houses would have been condemned save that there was an entire lack of other accommodation in the neighbourhood.'

Taking the census figures of 1911 for Scotland, and assuming a house to be overcrowded only if there were more than three persons to a room (as against the standard of two to a room in England and Wales), in 1911 nearly a quarter of the population were living in overcrowded conditions. Taking the English standard, the figure would be nearly one half; and that figure has largely increased since then.

The following extract is quoted from a memorandum submitted to the Scottish Local Government

Board by a deputation from the Middle Ward District of Lanarkshire :—

'In some houses there are three families resident; as many as twelve persons have been found in one-apartment houses; houses closed as uninhabitable have been reoccupied; in Cambuslang two families are living in the ruins of a property with a tarpaulin sheet as their only roof.' In Coatbridge, as a typical example, 'some one-apartment houses contained two married families, and in such houses sometimes three male lodgers are housed . . . for one that fell vacant 57 applications were received.'

Miners and their families form nearly a tenth of the total population of Scotland. Their houses are usually single story houses of two rooms built in long parallel straight rows, occasionally varied by 'the square.' They have usually been erected by the colliery companies, and because of the uncertainty of the mines the cheapest available form of construction and material has been adopted. The sanitary arrangements often outrage all decency.'

As the report says:—

'The Miners' Row of inferior class is often a dreary and featureless place, with houses, dismal in themselves, arranged in monotonous lines or in squares. The open spaces are encumbered with wash-houses, privies, etc., often out of repair, and in wet weather get churned up into a morass of semi-liquid mud. . . . Many houses show the faults of their class—leaky roofs, damp walls, and uneven and broken floors.'

What is the state of things to-day now that five years have passed with stagnation in the building and repairing of houses! It is unthinkable. Thousands of our fellow-subjects must be

living in houses which will not bear thinking about. They are cramped, they are unhealthy. Thousands of these houses ought to be condemned. They would be condemned even on pre-war standards, but where are the unfortunate residents to go? Even a pigsty is better than the gutter, and so many a dwelling has been allowed to stay, whereas it otherwise would have been scrapped.

I have heard—and you have heard—of the airy way some shallow critics answer these facts: these folk assert that it is useless supplying decent houses to the poor. The poor get drunk, they quarrel, they take no care of their homes. They have no consideration for the owner of the house. They pull down the banisters for firewood. Clean paint is anathema to them. They exercise no control over their children, and let them do what damage they please, knocking nails into woodwork, and glass out of windows.

This is an easy bypath to follow. It is the act of the moral coward who sees an enemy ahead and turns aside, as a thief darts down the nearest alley-way at the approach of a policeman. There are drunkards, alas, in every sphere of life, but, mark you, just as much in Mayfair as in Shadwell. And even for the poor of this class there is the excuse of the sordid surroundings from which the mind, however small, instinctively longs to escape.

But in the main the assertion is a libel. The majority of decent citizens among the working classes to the inebriated irresponsible must be thousands to one, and to point a finger of cynical contempt at the one as a reason for ignoring the just needs of the thousands is the meanest of false arguments.

Educate, educate, educate, by all means, until you have wiped out this miserable minority and given the entire community a sense of responsibility. And let me say that, in my opinion, one of the most powerful forms of education in this direction would be to improve the very conditions of the habitations in which these ignorant men and women live. It is so largely the environment which creates the character.

There is nothing as bad as overcrowding, both from the point of view of health and morals. The moral side is self-apparent. To think of numerous male and female members of a family, often of two families, crowded into one or two rooms by day and night, leaving no sort of privacy at any time, is at once to picture a state of things which must lessen the moral tone down to the vanishing point. We, as a State, are ready enough to judge these people when they commit some act which is against the public good, and is entirely the result of these conditions, yet we have gone on for generations ignoring those very circumstances which not only render these acts likely but almost inevitable.

From the purely health point of view—though, to be sure, it is impossible to divorce the morals of a people from that people's health, the two are so interdependent—Dr Mair, who made a special investigation, found that the number of deaths from pulmonary tuberculosis and the diseases of the young were half as many again in back-to-back houses as in ordinary dwelling houses. An examination of the reports of the London Tuberculosis Dispensaries (1913) shows that one half of the patients under the care of these institutions live in dwellings with one and two rooms. 'Only

134 out of 766 patients suffering from definite signs of pulmonary tuberculosis occupied separate rooms at night. The others were sleeping in rooms shared by one or more persons, and of these only 179 slept in separate beds, the remainder occupying the same bed as one or more members of the family.'

The War has made it infinitely worse.

The very definite shortage has become a famine. For four years the building of houses stopped. The carpenters, mechanics, plasterers, masons, plumbers, and labourers were all conscripted into the army. Large numbers were skilled, others, who in the ordinary way during that time would have been apprenticed, were not apprenticed, and that alone must hold things back.

In passing, I must refer to the talk there has been to the effect that the bricklayers have refused to do their best. It seems to be entirely lost sight of that, before the War, the amount of under-employment, non-employment, and casual labour in the building trade was simply enormous. Men dreaded the approach of winter. There were weeks of actual want, just at a time when the pinch of cold was felt the worst. We must remember the days when these men, anxious to work, called day after day upon their employers, only to find there was nothing to do. Remembering this it will be more difficult to blame them when, for the first time, there is a huge demand for their labour; they are sceptical and fear the return of the old state of affairs.

There was no security then, and they fear there will one day be no security again, no guarantee against the long weeks of unemployment. Give the men—as they should be given, as every worker

should be given—some guarantee against these weeks of slackness or actual want, and they will work. There will be no Ca'-canny movements to make the jobs there are last out over the lean times they fear may develop.

But to return to the subject of housing proper. Of all reflections on civilisation the worst is to be found in some of the streets and slums, the courts and alleys of our cities and towns. None is free. The houses are an insanitary mass, a jumble of mean bricks, foul and unrefreshed by draughts of clean air. No thought, no decency, no art, no beauty.

The policy of Labour would be the extension of the garden suburb idea, which, however, must always be accompanied by improvements in our transport. It is useless to expect a man to go and live miles from his work and afford him no reasonable facility of getting from home to workshop and back again quickly and comfortably, and cheaply. Much in this connection could be done—and would be done—to encourage the building of factories out of cities and not in them.

But changes cannot be made rapidly. We must face the fact that, for a long time to come, the housing problem will be aggravated by what has been called the economic rent question. When one talks of economic rents it always must include the liability to pay them. The nation to-day is so involved by the effects of the War that clearly it should as yet bear some of the burden, but after that has passed, the houses must be let at an economic rental. I cannot conceive it to be a good thing that the working classes should be subsidised in any way. It savours too much of charity, and, in the end, is demoralising and leads to corruption.

It will not be the policy of the Labour Government to nationalise houses. I believe, however, that the municipalities ought to be encouraged to find accommodation. They should, in fact, be held responsible for the housing accommodation in their districts. It means not only a direct control in the sort of houses that shall be erected, with the voter directly able to express his opinion on any branch of the subject—whether there are too few or too many being provided, whether the right type are going up, whether the gardens are extravagant or mean, and so on—but it would greatly foster local pride.

At the same time, the matter cannot be left there, for if a municipality happened to be indifferent or reluctant to provide for the needs of its people, it is clear some one else must provide for them. I would not cut out private building, but I would make conditions that would largely curtail the power of the speculative builder, which is, obviously, a very different thing. The gentleman I refer to has made as a contribution to housing nothing of value, and has too often merely hoodwinked the working man to struggle to obtain from him a bad bargain.

Something must be said here of the benefit of a working man owning his home. There is nothing that gives so great a feeling of security, and pride, and stability, as the owning of even a small cottage, and could there be universal ownership you would never have to fear that the occupier was tearing down banisters to make fires. That is the result of direct and personal experience among the men of our Unions. There are many thousands who have bought their houses through the Union, and let it be said that the Unions find it possible to

advance money to these members on better terms than they could get by any ordinary method of borrowing.

I am not entering here into question of detail. We are out for principles, for sweeping alterations. Very often it is not too wise to say until the occasion arises just in what manner the details should be worked out. I should never be stereotyped in the matter of accommodation. One thing we are at length realising is that the pokey small box of a room that invariably goes under the name of parlour in working men's cottages, and which really takes its space out of the living room, should be entirely obliterated. It is not in the parlour that the family sit in the evenings, and certainly it is not there that the housewife spends her life. Take away this fusty, unused room, and put some room and light and air into the parts of the house which are in use every day.

This subject takes us immediately to that of Health, and it is amazing to think that, prior to the Insurance Act of 1912, there was an entire absence of provision of any sort officially to look after the health of the public. When the Goverment set out for the first time to recognise that there were people whose income and position as workers and through many causes, did not enable them to make provision for times of sickness, the fact of this disability had a far more serious effect than is generally understood.

There were large numbers of men and women going to work when they ought to have been in bed. They spread the germs of disease among their fellow-workers, and, so far as they themselves were concerned, gave themselves no chance to

make a complete recovery. They returned too soon after an illness, and there was the inevitable set-back, and, of course, in thousands and thousands of cases, diseases and physical troubles developed seriously because they were not taken in hand in time. All this was solely due to the fact that no provision was made for them. There was no Inspector to look after their health; there was, unfortunately, not the knowledge to realise their trouble, and, when it was pressed home to them, there was not the means to obtain that remedy which every human being is entitled to. The Insurance Act did something, but not nearly enough. The amount of money it allowed, which has since been increased, is even now totally inadequate, and, in addition, the measure leaves some of the most fundamental needs of health untouched. It enabled the father to receive medical benefits, but no provision was made for the mother or the children, unless the mother herself happened to be an insured worker under the Act. It even resulted in a man going from a Sanatorium after treatment to conditions which rendered any permanent recovery impossible.

And mixed up with these deficiencies is the position of our hospitals. You have only to take up a daily paper any day, and you will see appeal after appeal made by public-spirited men to enable them to carry on hospital work. Have you thought that these pathetic appeals are often an intimation that hundreds of patients are waiting to be treated should ever the funds render it possible? Thousands of people ill, perhaps in a state dangerous not only to themselves, but to the community, simply because these national institutions, being entirely dependent upon charity, cannot use even

the accommodation that they have because of lack of money.

The only way out is a State Medical Service. Hitherto there was a feeling that a doctor would not work with the State. Well, we saw the best answer to that in the magnificent service they rendered during the War. That alone justifies us in the assumption that they will be equally available again, under proper safeguards and conditions, to serve the people in peace as they did when in khaki. And more attention would be paid to the question of medical research. It is a scandal that a man to-day whose work is research, and ought to be research, has to worry over difficulties about domestic balance sheets. If you read history you will find that a vast amount of discovery in every branch of life, particularly in medical affairs, has been at the expense of some great human suffering and sacrifice, merely because the discoverer had not proper means to work regardless of income. All this should be looked after by the State, and, just as the Universities would give primary education to the medical student, the hospitals, governed by the State, would provide the training. What better return could a young doctor make than to work in the service and for the institution that gave him his profession ?

With this question of health, too, must be definitely associated the question of the children. We must remember among all this talk of indemnities and wealth and shortage, that the real and lasting wealth of any country is not the amount of capital within it, not the number of capitalists it possesses, but the number of happy and contented homes with children enjoying a free, full and

healthy existence. It is upon this that the future of a nation depends. Encourage the people to have children, and give every child a welcome and a reasonable start in life, and the nation will be laying a proper foundation for future greatness. At the moment, the birth-rate is improving enormously. What sort of welcome are we preparing for these citizens-to-be? They come, remember, mostly to lower middle classes of working men's homes, yet there are magistrates, and coroners, too, who are sometimes prompted by an unfortunate sense of duty to bully poor people for having large families. Of course, it is quite right to view with apprehension the entry into the world of a large number of children for whom no adequate provision has been made; but as children are essential, beyond everything else, to the continued existence of a nation, it is clearly the Government, in whose hands lie the means for improving social conditions, rather than the parents of the children, that should be censured.

Undoubtedly there are large numbers of sensible men and women who, faced by the problem of maintaining a family, have come to the conclusion that it is a greater crime to bring children into the world to starve than deliberately to connive at preventing their advent.

This, I readily admit, is a most undesirable state of affairs, but it is essential that we should do more than this. We have not yet reached that desirable stage wherein to admit an evil is to remedy it. To burke the facts does not in any way help to solve the problem; it is, indeed, an imperative necessity that we should boldly apply ourselves to the finding of a remedy, and this is especially necessary when we remember the terrible losses

of the manhood of this country that the War occasioned.

It is true that the Government have recognised, though very tardily, one side of this question in the provision of school feeding; but encouragement and help must be given at a much earlier stage than this, and I would boldly declare for a State scheme for the endowment of Motherhood. It could take many forms, and might vary in details, but, if it contained the assurance that every child born should have a fair chance without impoverishing its brothers and sisters and making the life of the parents, and especially the mother, one long misery, much would be done towards solving this delicate but very urgent problem.

Is it not obvious that child life cannot thrive in the stifling atmosphere of an over-crowded slum, where even a plant would find it difficult to grow? Is it not obvious that, when a child does survive this unhealthy environment, it is likely to profit little more than a warped and stunted manhood?

Think for a moment what it would mean if a scheme were found by which the mortality of children under five years of age was reduced by fifty per cent. Such an achievement would be a revolution in social reform, and surely there is none to-day who, in the face of all our boasted progress and broadened vision, would say it is not possible? In that lies the greatest tragedy. Through all the long years of peace the nation, often with complacency, has been suffering terrible losses which could have been averted.

Quite naturally and properly we deplore our losses in sturdy manhood on the battlefields—losses suffered in a good and righteous cause;

but year in and year out we have supinely permitted this life blood of the nation to be shamefully wasted. The little children who would be the men and women of to-morrow are lost to the nation, because our legislature has never found time to evolve a sufficiently drastic reform in our social conditions to remedy this evil.

The revelation which resulted from the Statement of Inspection of Teeth has clearly demonstrated the value, to the future citizens of the country, of official observation, and no department in the Government has a greater opportunity in this direction than the new Ministry of Health. So long have the activities touching health—even such as they are—been diversely controlled, very often pulling against each other. Mothers, workers in factories, infants, school children, disabled soldiers and sailors, destitute persons—all these and other classes have come under different handling. Sometimes the authority has been the Local Government Board, sometimes the Insurance Department, the Privy Council come in here, the Board of Education there. The Pensions Ministry —the Board of Agriculture have their spheres, too. How could any general improvement on broad lines be effected with such a conglomeration of direction? The Health Ministry may—and should—associate these efforts into one big channel, but it is doubtful if, until Labour governs, the matter will be freed from the Red Tape of Officialdom and assume a vast national campaign.

Consider, for example, the mothers; what has been done for them? Nothing. It is almost unbelievable, and would appear so to any one who could come with fresh ideas from the remote

top of some other world upon this our so-called civilisation. That they should go ignored by the authority that is called a government!

One can imagine almost a worship given to these women of our race at the time when new lives are born. One can imagine a State full of carefulness and gentleness towards them, helping with every possible effort of science and comfort to bring to fruition the promised life, and afterwards to tend it until the plant, so to speak, is hardy and able to meet the storms and frosts.

Instead—well, we are beginning to realise that perhaps the mother ought not to go to work right up to the moment of confinement, or yet to return immediately afterwards. Some of my readers may believe I am exaggerating in indicating that such a state of things ever obtained in England. But it did, and even the belated effort made under the Insurance Act is not nearly sufficient. The public conscience has been aroused a trifle over the matter. If nothing further can be done before, then when Labour holds the reins there will be a drastic change in this matter.

Our conception of a free and happy people does not, for one thing, include such a possibility as the mother being compelled to do part of the bread winning. All the talk of healthy and happy homes, of a fair chance for the children, is mere playing with words if it means that the mother must take her share in the factory toil. Too much mischief has already been caused in a thousand ways through this system, and in any state of society we are boasting of, it ought not to require the joint incomes of husband and wife to keep the house going.

There you have the essence of the present

trouble and the heart of future reform. Improvement will never come, save in small instalments, until Government has lifted the general status of labour. The fight for mere existence, which has been the normal condition for generations of the man who worked with his hands, shall cease. He shall get adequate pay for necessities and for comfort. We insist on his development. Work shall not be the all and end all of his life. Under more liberality and sympathy his ego will expand, education will open his eyes to the wealth of existence, and with the beginnings of aspiration towards higher living and general uplift in his home will come, in the end, the great justification for that social regeneration for which Labour step by step is fighting.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION—IN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE HOME

It is as unfortunate as it is unfair to suggest that there can be no relationship between Labour and the direction of education. 'How can Labour control our big universities?' ask the unthinking, and they add, with a sneer, 'It would be a bad day for the universities and for learning if such control ever happened.'

These critics, of course, think that a navvy typifies Labour, and, just as it always takes the process of years to work any evolution, I suppose it will be long before certain branches of the public grow to appreciate that there is an intelligence in the Labour Party, that there are men in it thoroughly capable of large-minded governing, and of universal statesmanship; that this party has a thorough programme which includes all the activities of all grades, and does not exist for the exploitation of the toiler at the expense of every one else. We shall not legislate only for the navvy, or the miner, or the railway worker, or the bricklayer. For none of these to the exclusion of others. Our government will be for the community as a whole, whereas we claim that, in the past, government has been for the privileged few.

It is true that, during recent years, we have fought for the lower classes almost exclusively, but that is only because other governments have allowed them to get into a state that in many

ways was slavery. Their claims were so obvious, their needs so crying, that in setting out on the great scheme of social reform, which makes up our programme for the entire community, these grievances had first to be tackled.

We are only on the fringe of even that improvement. It is granted that much has been done towards bettering the lot of the mass of workers, but we shall see no fundamental alteration until Labour holds the reins.

There are many who still shrug their shoulders at the notion. They can see nothing but strikes and can say nothing but that one word, 'Bolshevism.' Labour does not want strikes. Strikes are the necessary evil in the campaign of education—the education of the majority of electors towards what is just to the worker. It is transitory; the froth on the stream. We are at the confluence. Labour has been only a tributary, but now it has gathered force, and has mixed its power with that river of capitalism which for generations was entirely dominant. Before the tributary increases into the main stream there will inevitably be bubbles.

But there will be no Bolshevism. We who knew all along that the ideals and material changes for which we were fighting were those that must set right the world and make it a better and happier and more just place for the majority, never feared that anarchy would result. At all events only in the passing phase. Had it come to that we should have had to face it just as we had to face the Germans when their system of domination grew too great and threatened peaceful progress. But there was never any chance of that sort of riotous breaking from old ways, which has just been seen in Russia, coming into operation in England.

The British working man is too sane a fellow for that, and let me add—as the War proved—too patriotic, and too proud of his own country.

There was no anarchy in Australia when, fifteen years ago, Labour took over office there. I know that we can make no general comparisons between this country and Australia, but there is this: No one would assert that the Empire is any say less secure because in Australia and New Zealand Labour is in charge. They have had differences, we know, as every political party has, but all I want to say here is that they have not failed in the art of government. And neither will the same party fail in Britain, though I am well aware that the problems here are a hundred times more acute and more complicated, built up slowly through the generations, whereas out in the colonies the ground has been fresh and the population scant.

Those who were natural enemies of Labour looked to see their predictions fulfilled at the memorable conference at Scarborough, and I suppose these prophets were never more confounded than by the vote which was given there against the Moscow International. We are not out for anarchy, we are out for peace, far more so than those who, having vast personal possessions and, therefore, vast interests in their properties, are prepared to risk all to keep them.

Whilst considering Labour conferences and education it is a striking fact that, whenever education comes up for discussion, there is always a strong vote in favour of a bold and generous policy of improvement. We realise that, in any community such as we are aiming at, and boast one day to get, the worst of all possible handicaps will be an ignorant democracy. Of all public

expenditure there can be none so important as that which ensures true citizenship for the future. Labour, when it rules, does not mean to be but another autocracy. We will wipe out selfish interests if we can, and legislate for the good of the majority.

And in education that means the throwing open of all possibilities of instruction to every child in the land. I know we are supposed to have such a situation to-day, but it does not work out in practice. Some will say that the universities are open to the brilliant boy. So they are. But what do you say to the fact that there are lads who, despite handicaps in their upbringing, have won scholarships and then have been unable to take advantage of them because they have had to go to work for the sake of their brothers and sisters or their own parents? Isn't this a scandal? Is this throwing open all avenues to every one? To give an ambitious boy the key to a door, and then to say he may not use it—could there be any greater tragedy? especially when he sees countless others with the key pushed into their hands without effort and quite often without its being likely to be of any benefit to themselves and, therefore, to the community and posterity? What do we lose when we thus debar boys (who have, in fact, proved themselves above all others of their age) from achieving whatever their genius might lead to? The world must be poorer by such blind-worm policies. Surely any student who has proved himself worthy should not be lost to advancement because of the lack of the mere wherewithal of his daily bread, or that of his parents! Education should not depend on a domestic balance sheet. We are all proud of our public schools. Every one senses the tone of the public school boy. Why

is there not a similar tone in the elementary schools of the land? Why are not the same results obtainable?

It is possible to make every boy a public schoolboy by making every public school public. The snobbish will smile, and smile they may, but in the end it will come.

At present in our elementary schools you have a thousand wrongs, each constituting a brake on proper education. For one thing, this wise government allows a teacher to be paid less than a navvy. Think of that little fact and, at the same time, remember that the real test of a teacher is not merely the conveying of a certain knowledge, but the impressing upon the pupil the traits of high character.

The teachers are falling off. We have been threatened with something of a famine of men teachers in our elementary schools. No wonder. We do not at present encourage them—not the right type of teacher at all events. Those who have any ambition at all have certainly no ambition to spend their days in hardship while they seek, in sacrifice, to impress young Britain with that which is best in manhood. No, they go out into the world of business or into other of the professions where the reward comes for work done. Blame them if you like, but I blame the system that makes such a situation possible.

There are other reasons against the present schools. The classes are too large, instruction becomes hopeless for the teacher and useless for the student. There is not the right opportunity given for the development of sport. Compare the slum school playground with the fields of Eton. And, of course, there are the general

surroundings of the schools, drab and uninspiring. There is no atmosphere, and no pride in the schools is created.

Let us also be rid of the sectarian and religious bickerings. This is a clearly established policy of the Labour Party. Home and the Sunday School are the right environment for religious education.

Make your elementary schools right, and you will have the beginnings of the right product of man. Let those who are worthy go on to the universities, all free and open, no class differences, every one with the same chance, and you will have done something to put education on the right lines. Education should be under the control of the nation from start to finish. The present system of local and municipal management is absurd. Why, for instance, should the rates in West Ham be higher than in any other of the better-class suburbs? Do they get better treatment—these little fellows of West Ham? And, anyhow, the man trained in one place is very likely to spend his life, and, therefore, his abilities, in a far different place. The system must be made national, it must go on the national budget, and all should be treated alike, all alike having the same chances to go on as far as their abilities will carry them.

There is another side of education, which demands the earnest consideration of everybody of thought who seeks to lead the country. That is the education of adults.

It is one of the good signs of the times that there is a demand among adults to improve themselves and so fit themselves for better things. The working classes—at least the more intelligent members of them—are desirous of improvement

not only for their own advancement, but with the object of social development and good citizenship. The feeling was so apparent that the Ministry of Reconstruction, before the end of the War, set up a committee to look into the matter.

Describing the nature of the demand among adults for education of a non-vocational character, the Committee says :—

'The motive which impels men and women to seek education is partly the wish for fuller personal development. It arises from the desire for knowledge, for self-expression, for the satisfaction of intellectual, æsthetic and spiritual needs, and for a fuller life. It is based upon a claim for the recognition of human personality. This desire is not confined to any class of society, but is to be found amongst people of every social grade.'

'The motive is also plainly social. Indeed, so far as the workers are concerned, it is, we think, this social purpose which principally inspires the desire for education. They demand opportunities for education in the hope that the power which it brings will enable them to understand and help in the solution of the common problems of human society. In many cases, therefore, their efforts to obtain education are specifically directed towards rendering themselves better fitted for the responsibilities of membership in political, social, and industrial organisations.'

This movement had set in before the War. Naturally it had a set-back when hostilities started, but it is a striking tribute to the workers that, since the armistice, the volume of educational activity is larger than ever. The working man is no longer a lethargic individual just indolently doing what he finds necessary in order to get his daily

bread. He wants to know. He wants to learn, to improve, and not only does he wish to learn those things which will help him in the particular job he may be engaged in, he wants general knowledge and general culture so that he may be a more useful member of the community.

We shall make it easier for men and women to acquire knowledge. At present excessive hours of work, and many other causes, make it difficult for them to obtain education, and I think one may fairly state, judging by what has been done, that the more you reduce working hours the more will the average working man take advantage of his spare time to obtain knowledge.

How can many men and women to-day satisfy any ambition that they may have for education? Their hours are long, and they very often have to work overtime. In seasonal trades, where the period of pressure happens to be in the winter time—when educational facilities are most available—there is a further hindrance. And, of course, there are many grades of workers who, though their total number of working hours may not be excessive, have those hours so spread out over the day that they have no regular evenings to themselves. The tramway worker, for instance, has his periods of inaction several times during the day, but from beginning to end his work is spread out over the best part of twelve hours. The shift system has the same effect. One week a man may work in the mornings, the next in the afternoons, and the next at night-time. For a man to be engaged upon night-work means that he cannot use any educational facilities there may be in his neighbourhood; he cannot even take part in civic or social activities.

I would like further to quote the considered findings of the Committee set up by the Ministry of Reconstruction:—

'From the point of view of education and of participation in public activities (a most valuable means of education) one of the greatest needs is the provision of a greater amount of leisure time; this is the more necessary because of the increasing strain of modern life. The view sometimes held that the community must necessarily suffer economic loss as a result of shortening of working hours is not one to which modern economic science lends any confirmation, and has, indeed, received an impressive practical refutation from the inquiries into the relation between output and working hours conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Munitions during the War. The unduly long hours which still obtain in many industries are, in fact, but a legacy from the traditions of half a century and more ago, and persist in the face of scientific proof of their uneconomical results.'

We have done much since the War ended to reduce the hours of work, but not enough. In the England that lives under Labour's rule the day's work will be got into shorter time, and this while it will give greater chances for leisure and improvement, will not, in the end, reduce production. The experience of the War in munition factories is convincing to any one that leisure, more leisure, does not mean less work, but on the contrary, a man who has leisure does more during his working hours than the man who works longer and who gets stale because of much overtime.

We are making steps towards the right end, and can we not to-day agree with this opinion of the Committee's report though it

was written just before the end of the War? It says:—

'The revulsion against long hours, exhausting forms of labour and monotonous employment is fully justified by the results of scientific research. The fear of unemployment which hangs like a heavy cloud over so many breadwinners brings a sense of insecurity into their life and deprives them of all incentive to take a whole-hearted interest in the various activities which are a necessary accompaniment of a complete life. In such circumstances it is surprising that they make as much response as they do to the appeals of science, literature, music, art, and the drama, and exert so much effort to equip themselves for the responsibilities of citizenship. The workman demands (*a*) security of tenure, (*b*) adequate wages, (*c*) freeing from the limitations which our present specialism imposes upon him. To hand out doses of education while these things are ungranted will be to play with the problem. You cannot 'educate' a man whose uppermost thought is the economic 'Struggle for Existence.' Nor can a spirit of intelligent and responsible citizenship be readily developed in those whose mainspring to activity is a continual struggle for the bare necessities of physical existence.'

No man is going to worry about improvement when he is concerned too much about the bare necessities of existence; that worry obsesses him to the exclusion of all else. But I think he is never going to get that freedom which security of tenure gives him until we have lapsed from the individual to the communistic system of business. We must have a democratic control of industry before we get any real emancipation. Now the democratic

control of industry does not mean that the worker shall purloin the factories and run them for his own advantage. It merely means that he should come into the government and management of those factories. There should be no board of directors that has not some representative of the workers upon it. And in this connection I wonder if opponents—blind opponents—of the claim have given any thought to the advantages that might accrue to the management itself by such a practice.

I have heard it said often that the workers in a works do not understand the conditions, that, if they did, they would never dream of pressing this or that claim. They have been charged with making unreasonable demands, such as would, if granted, make business unprofitable and end in shutting down the works. We all remember that, in one or two cases, this has actually happened. Firms—the members having made their fortunes—have declared that they would rather close down than pay increased wages, that the business would not stand increased wages, and that the owners would rather quietly go away for a holiday.

This argument may be true, the directors being well off haven't to worry, as the workman has, about the next week's victuals. But has it never struck these firms that the best way to let the worker understand the position is to permit him to have a representative or representatives upon the board of management? After all, it is as much their lives as those of the members of the directorate. They, as human beings, have as much right to see they get their deserts as have the owners of the business, and it seems to me if a certain claim is going legitimately to close down a business the men themselves, if they were represented on

the board, would be able to appreciate it as well as the directors. It would exercise a restraining influence upon excess just as surely as it would exercise an influence to see that justice was done to the worker, and that vast profits did not go to the fortunate employer, while the worker who made them possible was left in the cold—unconsidered and in poverty—as has been the case so regularly for so many generations.

What the worker objects to is the feeling of inferiority that has been pressed upon him for so long. He holds, and to my mind holds with justice, that the subordination of the worker to an industrial policy and to regulations for which he is in no way responsible, is unjustifiable because it is not consistent with the rights and obligations which ought to be inherent in membership of any organised group in society. We want, and mean to grant, industrial democracy.

There is too much of the spirit of acquisition on the part of the few. Industry does not exist to make the few wealthy, it exists for the benefit of all. And those who declare that the worker will assume, should he get the power, the arrogance the employer assumes, do not realise the worker's claim nor his ambition. He wants only fair play, a fair reward for his labour, which means, to bring the matter back to the subject of education, a reasonable time of leisure in which he can improve himself, and take his rightful place in the duties of citizenship.

Before I leave the question of education I should like to say a word on the subject of foreign languages. The classical régime is dead, so far as the masses are concerned. There will always be the student who will take the dead languages, and, of course,

it is well that the glories of those tongues and the lost civilisation of the peoples who spoke them should not pass from our ken and our studies.

But apart from these few, we must modernise our teaching. It must no longer be felt that those who take the modern side are merely escaping the classics because of any mental deficiencies. It must be admitted that our insularity in this respect has meant a great loss to us even in the business world. We are inclined to think that any one who does not speak English is a fool and deserves not to have our custom. But the thing acts both ways, and every one knows that we, as a nation, have lost because we have not been conversant with the language of peoples with whom we have wished to do business. The distributing trade of South America passed from British into German hands, even where British goods were concerned, just because our people would not take the trouble to learn Spanish, whereas the Germans did take that trouble. The Germans, our rivals, take the trouble to learn any language, and we must do the same. The inclusion of languages in every school curriculum ought to be made compulsory. And a knowledge of languages should also be accompanied by a knowledge of the history and the movements of the countries to which the languages belong. We must understand the thoughts of the people and the movements which control them. Education needs vast widening in this respect.

There is a story, I believe a true one, of an embassy out east, where no single member could talk the language of the natives among whom it was established. That is typically British and typically stupid. How could the members of that

embassy understand the psychology of the people when none of its members were able to speak the language? And in other ways the same argument applies in the business world. It applies, too, more abundantly in regard to scientific discoveries. The ethnologist, the economist, and every expert is, to a degree, dependent upon ideas that are born among other peoples. Unless these students are able at first hand to read and understand the thoughts that are animating foreign students, how can they keep abreast of new discoveries, and how much do we, as a nation, and the world in general, lose by the handicap?

The ideal of education is to enable men to live better. To carry out this ideal we must know the mind of the world. Yet there are few schools to-day properly equipped to teach modern languages. No—we rely upon foreigners themselves who come to this country and work for us, we being too lazy to learn. And this not only handicaps us, and loses to our people a big scope for utility, but it provides a means for the foreigner, our business rival possibly, to learn our ways of life and of business, and, therefore, gives him a very real start in the race of the nations for success and prosperity.

CHAPTER IX

THE 'TRADE'

I DO not believe Prohibition is practicable at present.

The prohibitionist campaign is a propagandist activity. As a method of dealing with the drink question it is outside the range of practical politics. I am not concerned with the pros and cons of prohibition. I am looking at the drink problem from a practical point of view. At the present time three quarters of the male population of the country take alcoholic drink. In face of this, it is obvious that, whether prohibition is a desirable policy or not, it is not one which would command public support. As practical men we must look to some policy which will be acceptable to the people as a whole.

But national control of the liquor trade—yes! That will be part of our legislation, undoubtedly.

Out in the States to-day, where extreme Sahara-like dryness is supposed to be applied, it is the fashion for the wealthy no longer to display their art treasures and their curio collections, but to beckon the visitor below stairs, and, undoing the padlocks, to exhibit their wine cellars.

Moreover, in some quarters the laws are cheerily evaded. I was reading in the papers not so long ago of a petition that had been got up and signed by the women of one rather remote locality —which threatened those who make the whisky, those who were selling it, and those who drank

it that, all the names being thoroughly known to them, they would one and all be reported to the authorities unless the illicit practice were at once stopped—a form of direct action which, apart altogether from the merits or demerits of it, clearly proved that behind-the-scenes drinking goes on.

There is no sort of reason in the methods of licence that have obtained so long in this country. We must have the ' Trade ' in the hands, not of the profiteer, but of the government.

If you know anything of the history of this business—and as a member of the Liquor Control Board I may claim some first-hand knowledge—you will know that the publican has had a very good innings.

For generations he had the power to dictate to the legislature what laws should govern him. He practically controlled a certain political party, and, of course, propaganda—had it been necessary then—was simple, since his house was the talking shop of every locality.

Houses went from father to son; the profits came easily and were assured, unless by some excess the licence was placed in jeopardy.

It was only when elementary education began to be general and free that the ' Trade ' took alarm. There began to grow up powerful movements which not only were tilted against the unsanitary public-house, but led away from its influence and into the country by cycle, or on to the local cricket fields.

The outlook was darkening for the publican, and, though he instantly sought to save his own skin by becoming a limited liability company, or selling out to the big brewery firms which began

to form large capital concerns, he, nevertheless, saw the time near when his large profits were not to be easily scooped in; when, indeed, there looked like being no profits at all.

The shareholders, who had been persuaded to put their money into the 'Trade' were none too jubilant. They began to realise that they were not being allowed magnanimously to share the wonderful success of the brewer; having made the brewer safe by investing their money they were now reaping the tares. Shares fell right and left, dividends were small.

The 'Trade' called its henchmen in Parliament together, and the scheme of making the licences into freeholds was conceived and passed. Think how this improved the value of the properties. It made them financially sound again.

And now, when the Labour Party come into power and want to buy out the present holders, a vast sum must be paid, seeing these licences are all freeholds instead of being held from year to year upon the sufferance of the magistrate. It was a gift of millions.

But that is only half the story.

The War contributes the other half—and pretty bad reading it makes. No one will forget the sort of stuff that the brewers put out during those years of war. It was appalling. The quality went down—and down. The price went up. It was a sudden era to the brewer. Before the War the amount taken by the purveyors of drink in the nation was £166,700,000, and in 1918 it had jumped to £259,300,000. And yet only about half the pre-war quantity was being drunk in the 1918 year. And, of course, with the curtailment of the quality came also the curtailment of the

hours of work to the publican. A very right thing from two points of view.

(1) The hours those engaged in public-houses had been forced to work before the War were terrible. The houses opened at six in the morning, and closed at eleven in the country and half-past twelve in London. It was not right to keep barmaids standing behind counters until such times. How much ill-health and lowered moral tone the business was responsible for can never be computed.

(2) It enforced a restriction on the consumption in a period of national strain. That it did so is proved by the fact that in 1918, despite the enormous revenue from drink only one-half the amount of liquor was consumed, and that of an infinitely lower gravity.

But why on earth should these restrictions have resulted in such swollen profits to the trade? They should have made no single penny extra. They worked less. They sold poorer stuff. But one knows of public-house after public-house which reaped a rich harvest, and one reads of brewery after brewery whose profits have skied like a shell. Whether they will return to earth, which means reasonableness, or not, remains to be seen. I have an idea that we shall never get to the rights of this matter until Labour takes hold, for this is all part and parcel of larger schemes for the workers of all monopolies and public services for the good of the entire community. Only then, upon this point, will the consumer get a fair article for a fair price, because the vast profits now being made by individual companies

under licence from the State will be wiped out.

Think what that means. Do you know of the enormous profits made by the publican and the brewer during the War? They are almost unbelievable. I will take half a dozen companies' profits:—

	1915-16	1917-18
A ..	14,427 ..	40,576
B ..	2,484 ..	26,953
C ..	295,628 ..	437,120
D ..	36,811 ..	181,062
E ..	80,885 ..	239,686
F ..	206,009 ..	472,974

It's pretty serious, isn't it? Don't you think it time all these profits ceased to go into private pockets? A Labour government would insist on the country buying out the liquor business from start to finish, and running it for the good of the community. There would be no vast profits then, and what profits there were would go into the national purse and thus help to lower taxation.

Private ownership failed during the War. It failed to play the game. It is not right that taking fifteen firms the profits during two years expanded from £2,591,060 to £4,164,048—over a million and a half. Dividends rose gaily from nil to 33½, from 9 to 30, from 2 to 7, from nil to 7½—to take four specific cases.

But these dividends are deceptive and unrevealing. One firm made over £262,000, but only a paltry £20,000 was distributed in dividends. Huge

sums were placed to reserve. Now it is a proper business precaution in a year such as the last of the War to lay up a reserve against a time ahead which might conceivably hold all manner of difficulties and trouble. But to place such a huge sum as I have indicated to reserve was doing far more than take reasonable precautions. Moreover, in many cases new shares were issued, this being but another way of hiding the dividends. Here is an actual case, being a newspaper paragraph appearing in 1918:—

'Messrs ——, the well-known brewers, to-day decided to make a further distribution of nearly £500,000 undivided profits in the form of additional share capital to existing holders. About £300,000 was so capitalised in 1916, and the chairman said there had been evidence of an increasing tendency to State control and ultimately to State purchase after the War. The State, therefore, should have some indication of the capital values with which it was dealing.'

You observe what lies behind this gentle threat. If there is going to be any notion of buying out the 'Trade,' the 'Trade' is going to bump up the price as high as it can so that the purchase price may be inflated to the skies. It is the same sort of smart business as that carried out by the man who happens to know that, for some public need, a certain piece of land will be necessary in the common interest. He secretly purchases it, and, when the State or the municipality comes along, this interesting gentleman quietly doubles or trebles the price. Oh, yes, Mr Bung did very well out of the War. Glance at the values of his

shares. Here are actual quotations on the stock exchange:—

	1915	1917	1919
A ..	2	25¾	86
B ..	12½	91	185
C ..	213¾	307¾	391½
D ..	10	85	169

Those simple figures spell fortunes to the investor, and one might think the 'Trade' would be content with its career of profiting. But no, it is striving, as is clearly indicated by the speech I have quoted, to convert this astonishing windfall into the basis for purchase if purchase comes.

But we will have none of it. Labour agrees, and has agreed all along, that the drink traffic must be controlled, must, indeed, become the property of the State, but we shall not buy out the brewers at twice the normal value of their industry. When Labour is in power the 'Trade' will not have the authority in the House of Parliament to override what is fair and just from the point of view of the public. It will pull its strings, no doubt, it will fight through its representatives, but those representatives will be in opposition and not in power, and a Labour Government will legislate for the good, not of the vested interests, but for the benefit of the community.

The 'Trade' will go, and the liquor business will become government owned. And purchase will, of course, be based upon the pre-war value, which has been declared to be 350 millions—quite enough to put into Mr Bung's pocket, seeing the enormous profits he has made during the War just when he was beginning to think his concerns, greatly over-capitalised, were going to the bad.

And if the argument that money is worth only half its pre-war value, and, therefore, the purchase price now ought to be at least 700 millions is maintained, we shall point to these enormous profits and shall say a decided 'No.'

The War did one good thing while it was filling up the emptying coffers of the 'Trade.' It proved the wisdom of control.

The effects of that were indeed amazing and encouraging to the highest degree. As Lord d'Abernon said in 1918:—

'The most vital and interesting claim for the work of the first three years (the period during which control had been in operation) is not that it effectually prevented alcoholic excess from interfering with national efficiency in the prosecution of the War—that, I hope, is common ground—but that by practical experiment and trial it has thrown so much new light upon the problem that the whole position has to be considered anew. Reform can now be entered upon with a firmer hope and a more confident assurance. New and easier avenues of approach have been discovered, large vistas of attainment to conditions far above previous contemplations are now open. Those who have striven in the cause of improvement may now, without undue optimism, assert that a permanent solution upon lines of general consent is more nearly within reach than at any previous period, without the sacrifice of any reasonable objective, and without injustice or injury to any legitimate interest.'

We must glance at the actual results of this control through the latter period of the War, and, indeed, the control that to-day exists. It is doubtful

if the public are cognisant of what was accomplished. Let us first take the figures of actual convictions for drunkenness. In 1913, throughout England and Wales, the weekly average of convictions was 3482. During the first six months of 1918 that appalling average had fallen to 615. Truly a tremendous reform. Eighty per cent.! Cases of delirium tremens dropped from 511 in 1913 to 99 in 1917. Death from alcoholism from 18,831 to 580. In the matter of attempted suicides, of the suffocation of infants, and in other respects where trouble could be definitely traced to the effects of drink, there were similar improvements. The effects can be traced all through our public health. It is not only that drunkenness fell by over eighty per cent., but a similar fall was registered in crime, and there is on all sides, from those who had opportunities for observation, the same testimony as to the improvement in home conditions.

For figures of actual cases of drunkenness do not reveal the full extent of the reform. A man's work is impaired long before his state could justify police interference with his freedom. Look beyond statistics of this sort and inquire what was the amount of increased efficiency in the world of labour.

The immediate object of the control was for the efficiency of the army, navy, and munition workers, and, in order to understand just how far that control was successful in these departments of public service during the War, you have only to read of the way the authorities constantly were asking for this and that area to be placed under the provisions of the order. This was not merely for the purpose of maintaining sobriety in the services, it was to make for efficiency. 'We want

the order which is working so well in —— to be applied to ——.' This was the constant request that came to the Liquor Control Board.

Now the authorities were not out to restrict the reasonable freedom of those men and women who were fighting our battles either in the army, navy, or in the making of the necessary munitions. They were out for the greatest possible output of effort, and they found that, putting restrictions upon the sale of alcohol was one of the sure means of getting the best. As a matter of fact, if the army authorities could have had their way they would have increased the restrictions rather than diminished them.

If you read the second report of the Board you will have seen that the judgment of the Admiralty based upon reports from admirals and other officers in important commands was to the effect that 'the general result of the restrictions has been decidedly beneficial,' that transport officers were unanimously of the opinion that the restrictions had been of great benefit to the transport service, and in especial that the principal officer at Southampton had 'commended on the increased efficiency and good health of all the labour at the docks.' These statements were made in 1916, and all later reports substantiated the statements and enlarged upon them.

So much for the navy. The army said exactly the same. Thus: In 1916 the military put it upon record that 'reports had been received from the various commands, the general effect of which shows that the orders of the Board have had a beneficial effect on the discipline, training, and efficiency of soldiers, and have helped in the recovery of the sick and wounded.'

At the same time Sir Edward Henry, the then commissioner of police for the metropolis, was saying concerning the reduction in the convictions for drunkenness: 'The figures are remarkable. They confirm police observation that many fewer drunken persons are to be seen in the streets of London, and they indicate that the measures taken by the Central Control Board have had a very marked effect.'

And one could go on endlessly quoting authorities to prove the efficacy of the new regulations. It was an experiment; it was novel when it was introduced, but seldom has an experiment so highly justified itself.

But in considering the future of the 'Trade' it is not too wise to rely on these statements concerning the fighting service. Times were abnormal, and it may be claimed that men were living under such stress of excitement that their conduct is not a reflex of what one might expect under normal peace conditions. Let us then turn to the industrial side of the community. Here there was, if anything, more temptation for the drinker than normally. Work was heavy, trade union restrictions had lapsed temporarily, men were working overtime, straining every effort to pile up the munitions for the men at the front. We all are aware of the strain of these times, and it would be reasonable to suppose that, after the day's tasks were over, the workers would be only too ready to turn to the refreshment of the public-house.

We have already seen, however, how the number of cases of drunkenness among the general public fell with a bump, and it may be added that the testimony of all employers went to show that work in factories had vastly benefited by the orders

of the Board. Bad timekeeping stopped, output increased, quality, too, and the general health of the workers. There were those among the employers who, when first the restrictions were suggested, looked upon them with doubt and even disfavour. They thought, I imagine, that it would lead not to better work but to unrest as a result of criticism among the men. The testimony of these employers is, therefore, particularly valuable. They had to eat their own words, had to admit one and all that the restrictions had meant in every case gains to efficiency. I have read a hundred reports from overseers of work during that period, and they are unanimous. In many parts the new scheme was 'almost unexpectedly successful.' Even in such places as steel smelting works, where the temperature of 138 Fahr. would justify, if anything did, the resort to liquid refreshment. This is what an overseer at one of these works reported in writing:—

'For an onlooker unaccustomed to conditions of labour such as these the greatest sympathy for the workers is excited, because the effort called for is tremendous, and the way these men perspire as a result of their heavy work and exposure to the furnace is astonishing. Beer is the usual refreshment. A few of the workers are abstainers, and these are the most reliable. When the supply of drink was restricted, owing to the closing of the public-houses in the district, a great improvement in the health and time-keeping of the workmen was noticed, and was admitted by the men.'

But it is not only work which matters—production. It is much in the national welfare, of

course, but not everything. The home life is just as important, and the health and care of the children. Those who watched the results with the keen eyes of the expert agreed that, when the sale of drink went down, the sale of essentials to the good of the home went up. Groceries, other food, clothing, furniture—all those things which make for a decent and comfortable home. Meanwhile pawnbrokers were losing their trade. The money was not going in drink. Children gained enormously. The number of cases of cruelty, for instance, from 1914 to 1917 went down 10 per cent., and an even greater effect could be traced in that sort of cruelty which is not sufficiently marked to merit police court proceedings. The women sanitary inspectors, who know better than any one else, because their work takes them into the homes of the poor, all reported improvement. The women were more in their homes in the morning, and, consequently, the children were better looked after; less drinking during the day meant more baking of bread, and families got into the habit of going to bed earlier and, therefore, getting more rest.

All over the country the hospitals felt the result. Cases of accident in the streets, very often the result of inebriety, became fewer, and that this really was the result of the closing is shown by the simple fact that these cases which used to come in late—in the country after eleven o'clock, and in London after midnight—now came earlier, synchronising with the earlier closing of the public-houses. Street brawls lessened impressively.

That is just a hurried glance at the record of restricted selling of drink. It may be only part of the tale, but it suffices to justify up to the hilt,

to any unprejudiced mind, what was done. The position now is: Are we going to allow the country to slide back into the old ways when already so much has been done? Lord d'Abernon put it concisely when he said: ' To restore drink conditions to the position before the War would be deliberately to re-create drunkenness at the rate of nearly 200,000 convictions a year, with its terrible accompaniment of crime, disease, and death.'

We must never go back. I have gone into the experience of the past because of the lessons they hold for us in the future. It is a fact that the restrictions were for the period of the War only and a little time afterwards, and, in some respects, there has since been a slight easing up. Whatever is done by the present rulers of the country in this important matter, the Labour Government which is to be will never permit the old conditions to return, and if by then they have returned, as they might because of the vested interests there are in Parliament, we shall change them again.

Not back merely to what things are to-day, infinitely better though these are than what they were. We must go further. It is understandable that men engaged in monotonous labour turn to the public-house for recreation, just for the mere forgetting of the day's routine which deadens the mind and kills aspiration. It is not suggested that we close the public-houses. The right thing to do is to improve them as well as restrict the hours they are open.

Some one has said that, with the old opportunities of drinking, it was surprising not that people got drunk but that any who drank at all remained sober. Let us then have a reasonable service in

this respect, but also a reasonable restriction. And more than that, let us have the houses decent places, with light and air, and none of that secrecy which seems to lie behind the closed doors of the bars to-day. Drink is encouraged because, very often, eating facilities are poor. The canteens, which were set up all over the munition areas during the War, were of incalculable benefit to the workers. And in the State public-house of the future there will be facilities for more than standing room at a bar where one can buy beer. The public-house should be a place where a man can take his family, where they can sit together and talk and eat as well as drink, where there is light and not stuffiness and unhealthy conditions, where the place may be open to the world on the lines of the cafés in France.

But beyond all, the great barrier which private interest raises to big reform in the sale of drink must be torn down firmly and finally. Mr Bung must go. We come back inevitably to the position with which we set out. The State must own the 'Trade.' Brewers, distillers, publicans are like the rest of human beings. The moment they see their own particular interest threatened, they resist. They get every ounce of influence they can pull to help in the fight. This has gone on until it is proverbial. They have established themselves in a system which is unbelievably bad for the community, and now that we have had the lessons of control so successfully demonstrated, there is nothing to justify the nation in holding back from complete control and reform.

The whole business should—and will—be taken over, run for the public good, and, incidentally, whatever profit there is, run too for the sake of

the public purse. For there will be profit, naturally! but not the amazing profits the publican has been recently putting in his pocket.

But Labour stands for decentralisation and local control of the drink trade. It is of the utmost importance that the ' Trade ' should be governed in accordance with local needs and local opinion. There is no reason why State ownership should not be combined with local control. It is, in fact, only in this way that the public can be sure of bringing its will to bear upon the drink trade.

The local management must reflect the real opinion of the people in any district. It should be for the locality to determine, subject to general national regulations, the distribution of licensed houses, the provision made in them for public needs, and the number of public-houses. This last point brings us to the question of the power of localities to extinguish all the licences within its area.

Localities would be empowered by the State, where there is a dominant opinion in favour of abolishing the ' Trade ' entirely, to convert the public-houses to other social uses. But such a policy of local option would be effective only if the ' Trade ' were in the hands of the State. Local option, when it is adopted, must rest on a basis of public ownership. The two methods in conjunction would ensure that the drink question was being dealt with nationally on a comprehensive scale, whilst allowing local autonomy. In this way, and in this way only, can this traffic be subordinated to the will of the people, and made to reflect public opinion.

CHAPTER X

OUR FOREIGN RELATIONSHIPS

WHATEVER may be said of the merits of the late War there is one thing which cannot be dissociated from it. That is our foreign policy, and, in this respect, one has more especially to remember our commitments in the way of secret agreements.

The most notorious illustration that happened after the War, and which lead to all the trouble in the Peace Treaty in regard to Italy, was the secret arrangement with that Power, known as the Pact of London. One appreciates how far that pact helped this country in the time of its trial, and, when the defeat of a nation is threatened, it is human to suppose the politician becomes an opportunist, and will be ready even to bribe an outsider to come to his help. When War has its grip upon the world the harassed men who are behind the scenes are not apt to be exactly punctilious about arrangements between themselves, nor to realise too readily that the promises they make to gain immediate ends may bring a harvest of trouble as an aftermath.

The great thing is to plan the progress of mankind towards the elimination of wars, and one of the greatest helps to this end would be the abolition of the very thing we are talking about —secret diplomacy. If there is one thing the working classes, I believe not only of this land but of every land, are keen about, and united

upon, it is the ending of secret diplomacy. That must inevitably form the basis of any Labour policy.

And that must mean a vastly different attitude towards the Peace Treaty from that which has been adopted during the creation of it. If Labour had been in power on the two continents when that treaty was drawn up, it would have been a very different document, for you must realise that, if ever decisions were taken leaving the world in the dark, they were taken by that inner committee, first of four, then of three, who sat and re-made the map of the world. They laid down rule after rule which none knew of; they came to decision after decision entirely upon their own individual authority, and in doing these things they built brick upon brick, not of a new foundation for world peace, but of a barrier against the hope that the end of all war had come. In the peace there are such seeds of war as it will be difficult for even a united international Labour Government to eradicate.

The world's hope lies in Labour in this matter. The politicians and the capitalists and the military fanatics have had their try, and failed. We are no farther along the road under their narrow guidance than we were in 1914. All that has happened is that they have invented a few new machines—and turned the eyes of the sane and peaceful to a possible community of peoples, which the peoples themselves, and only the peoples, will ever be able to carry out.

It must be changed from a League of Nations. It must be the League of Peoples. The professional diplomat with his secrets and pigeon-holed agreements must go. There can never be any accommodation with them on the part of a Labour

Government—with these men who broke through all the promises of a new world and resorted in the end to the old, old tricks.

Since the War has finished we have made again private agreement with other nations. We have a new triple alliance. We are under contract to help France if France is attacked by Germany. On the face of the matter that is a perfectly friendly and just thing to do. We stick by our friend, good. We help him to defend himself. Oh, yes, it is entirely a defensive undertaking.

British labour certainly desires the protection of republican France from the horrors of invasion. But alas! we know what these 'defensive' wars may be. Has not Germany declared she fought only to defend herself? And, again, how often do we hear that the best method of defence is attack! Rightly so. If a man is going to knock you down, you get your blow in first, if you can. The trouble is afterwards to prove he meant to attack you.

Very well, we are under contract to help France in case of emergency. What are the possibilities of that emergency? It is only natural that we should consider that.

Assume for the moment that Germany recovers, and re-creates her military strength, what is she going to do? She is not going to attack France. She will develop on the eastern side. She will seek to undermine the ledge that separates her from Russia, with the idea eventually of forming a new German-Russian alliance. Poland stands between. It is to the interest of France that she supports Poland, for the very purpose of stopping a German-Russian compact. Imagine then a fight between these warring interests, where are

we? France supports Poland, we support France Here are the bases of a first-class war, and Russia, our late allies, may complicate the whole situation by boldly accepting the attention of Germany.

The Labour Movement all over the world is alive to this danger mine created by secret pacts, that the peace of the world will again be subject to the casual flare of a match. The French General Confederation of Labour has passed resolutions stating that, in their opinion the Peace Treaty 'carries on the transactions born of secret diplomacy, which is now indefensible,' and that 'far from establishing a new world régime which would render impossible any recurrence of war, it is permitting the continuance of germs of conflict similar to those which brought the late catastrophe upon humanity.' The Italian Socialists have said much the same formally, and, as a matter of fact, the diplomacy of Versailles was more secret than that of the Conference of Vienna. We can recall what M. Clemenceau said when he went to the Conference table. It was a direct assertion that the 'system of alliances would be his guiding thought' throughout the negotiations.

It is all wrong. We, surely, might have used this tremendous upheaval to break from those fusty ways, and set out on a new road which would have been an open road. We must have publicity in order to get honesty and justice in these matters. I don't for a moment suggest that there shall be no relations between powers without it is done at a mass meeting with the press of the world invited to attend. But the nation should never be committed on any vital foreign policy without the sanction and ratification of the people's parliament. That is our aim, and, as far as Britain

is concerned, that will be the immediate policy to be adopted as soon as Labour is in power.

And have you thought that such a lead will have a tremendous effect on the other nations? You may say that one side only would have difficulty in exercising open diplomacy. We might be discussing some question with Timbuctoo. Timbuctoo may say to us: 'This matter must not be mentioned or So-and-So will not like it.' What is our course? Well, in the first place, they would know that we should not agree to secrecy. Then, you may think, the matter will go undiscussed. Perhaps at first, and in a few isolated instances. But is it not more probable that the other side will think, as the matter is to be open for the world to examine in the light of day, that they must talk straighter, not bringing into the argument things that will not bear the light of day. Surely with such a power as Britain concerned that is the more likely, and that will make for the good of all international relationships. Every country will be provoked to put their cards down on the table, and, consequently, we shall be rid of those hole-in-the-corner proceedings which, depending upon the astuteness of individuals, lead to the spirit of revenge on the part of the bested party, and brings, in the end, some such conflict as that we have been through.

I may be asked, would we, if others would not treat with us thus openly, refuse to deal with such a Power? My reply is that our responsibility would be first to our own people, the people who had elected us on the platform of open negotiations. We should keep to our policy in face of anything of that sort, even if we could convince ourselves that to treat secretly would ultimately, upon some

given point, render a service not against but to our own nation.

We should probably be able to cut down the staffs considerably. For one thing, this open method would see the end of a great deal of espionage—espionage, that is, upon opinions, not entirely upon facts. What I mean is, that we should have to keep staffs for the purpose of necessary inspections and reports upon happenings. We should have our ambassadors and our consulates. These are necessary, both as a connecting link between governments, providing an obvious and easy vehicle of discussion, but also to assist the business relations between the nations. They might also be the means of encouraging good feeling internationally, but the spy as a spy seeking to weave intrigue and sway opinions would be no more.

We should also change the method by which the staffs associated with our Foreign Office are recruited. At the moment this office is the preserve of the wealthy. The diplomats who are trained there must have a private income of their own, which at once rules out merit. This service will, one day, be open to any member of the community who, by his attainments, proves worthy to fulfil the tasks, whether he is a person of wealth and 'good connections' or not. This is especially apparent when we think that the future diplomacy will keep in mind the good of the masses, and not of the classes. It will be from the ranks of the workers, more likely than not, that we shall obtain the right men to discuss with other powers the rights and wrongs of questions, since a Labour Government in Britain will be acting not for the vested interests but for the interests of the majority, of the community as a whole.

I think I ought to add this: We realise that this matter of Foreign Policy is closely bound up with our commitments on the army and navy. The two matters are inseparable. Some, no doubt, think that Labour would let the fighting forces be dissolved. That we should 'let the country go to the dogs.' But we understand, of course, that we shall have to have an army and a navy capable of backing our decisions. We should never countenance any expenditure on these services that would permit of the charge that we were aiming at military strength for offence. We, as a party, have finished with militarism, and especially in the present position of finances in this country we should not be lavish in our expenditure for a fighting machine. But there would have to be an army and especially a navy, and these would be maintained. But wars are going to have poor ground to grow upon when once we have persuaded the world to stop their secret intrigues and talk things over in the open.

And another thing also of great importance in considering our relations with foreigners: There must be no more private trading in armaments. That this has been allowed has merely created a vested interest in war, and it is appalling to think that we have reached this stage in our civilisation, and still permit private people to make money out of methods of human destruction. To put it as mildly as possible: The man who makes military equipment, who manufactures shot and shell, is not the most troubled man on the day a war is declared and an army mobilised. It would be interesting to know just how much British money or German money was made by the international armament people.

Make it illegal for any one but the State itself to make munitions; make it impossible to supply foreign powers with munitions, and you have done as much as anything ever could to bring about disarmament.

These things, I believe, are the definite wish of the vast majority of the people of this country. Why then should we have fallen back to the old tricks of diplomacy? It is perhaps the greatest and gravest sign of the times, and will inevitably lead to another disaster on a huge scale unless the people themselves insist on things being altered. Labour will alter them as soon as it gets the chance. Labour, indeed, is more and more committed to revision of the Peace Treaty. This is not a view belonging merely to us. Here is a criticism taken from an American organ of repute—*The New Republic* :—

'Examine the plan of the arrangement between France, Britain, and America in the European setting, and what does it mean? As a result of the War France is left as the one great military power on the Continent of Europe. Her army has a glorious tradition, the staff is the finest in Europe, her greatest rival is completely and permanently disarmed. Against this rival she is to be reinsured by a covenant which is supposed to apply the force of all its members against any kind of sudden aggression. Then a military frontier is given her, which means that at first hint of aggression by the disarmed Germans the whole left bank of the Rhine can be occupied without resistance by a completely armed France.

'To the French people, terrorised for forty years and invaded for four, this may at the moment

seem merely defensive caution. But not to the very astute politicians who manage French foreign policy. They know better. They know that the real meaning of this alliance is to give France a free hand in the mastery of the Continent. By making France absolutely immune to the consequences of any policy she may pursue, she is free to pursue any policy. On the Continent of Europe a nation which is in a privileged position of security is fatally tempted to pursue a policy of intrigue and aggression. That privileged position may be the military power of France absolutely reinsured by special alliance with sea power. Where that privileged position exists, the temptation to assert mastery is so intoxicating as to be beyond the power of control. . . .

'The result will be what it has always been. The other nations, far more insecure than France, will infer that if the authors of the Covenant do not trust the League, why in heaven's name should they? If France needs a special protection, the weaker States certainly do, and the next step is to find allies. Now, in the choice of allies as a means of protection, no nation has the slightest scruple. Republican France and Czarist Russia, England and Japan, Germany and Turkey; it is not principles, but battalions that count.

'The number of possible combinations is considerable. All of them, of course, will be purely "defensive." The only thing to remember is that these defensive groups will be extraordinarily interested in being loyal to one another. And being loyal to a defensive alliance means doing just about what the most determined member of the group insists upon. The result is a set of rival diplomatic groups, each arming for its own

defensive purposes, and each intriguing for a good start in the next war.'

I do not wish necessarily to agree with all that this commentator says, but there is surety in the fear that, unless some one puts right the errors of the Peace Treaty trouble will spring from it in the end. But perhaps we can consider this matter further when we glance more closely at the subject of the League of Nations.

CHAPTER XI

OUR COLONIES AND DEPENDENCIES

PERHAPS even more important than our relations with foreign countries is our management of our own Colonies and Dependencies. In this chapter I do not propose to speak of those Colonies which have their own Parliaments. Each is an entity unto itself, and, while it would be the ambition of a Labour Government to foster the friendship of all the children of the mother country, we should never interfere in their domestic government.

But there are, as we all know, vast tracts of this world's land which fall under the jurisdiction of Great Britain, the peoples of which have no voice in their own management. Of these countries I should like to set out the policy that Labour would adopt in regard to their government. At the outset let me say that, in bidding for the right to rule, we make no ephemeral appeal. These problems of National and Colonial Government, and, indeed, all relationships that affect the country and the Empire, have been carefully weighed by many experts who have given much thought, on behalf of Labour, to these problems. And when I set down here the statement that we should change radically many of the institutions which have grown up during the years, I would like my readers to understand that the effects of such changes have been carefully gone into and weighed by

minds amply able to adjudicate upon the effect of such changes.

It is a fact which we do not always recognise, that practically a quarter of the earth, and over a quarter of the earth's inhabitants are included within the British Empire, and that of the four hundred and thirty-five millions who inhabit these domains only sixty-five millions (and these include those in the United Kingdom and the Dominions) enjoy a responsible government. And this leaves a vast conglomerate mass of varying races, with diverse religions and in different stages of civilisation, numbering in all three hundred and seventy millions, who have no control over the way they are governed, and whose destinies are really guided by gentlemen who sit in little offices in Whitehall, London. In view of this it is obvious that Labour must have an imperial policy based upon its eternal principles of mutual goodwill, of government for the good of the majorities, of services, not to private or vested interests of the capitalists, but to the common will of the common citizen, which form the basis of our own home policy.

I know of no better example which it might profit us to study than that of Africa—that part of Africa which is governed either as crowned colonies, or protectorates. That rules out the Union of South Africa, which is a self-governing dominion, and leaves—though you may not think it—a million and a half square miles of territory, and twenty-eight million Africans who are without the power of raising a voice, subject to our rule. The little gentlemen in Whitehall are the autocrats who dictate to this vast community of people. We ought to remember that this community in its numbers almost equals the entire population

of Great Britain. There are over twenty millions in West Central Africa, which includes Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia; nearly eight millions in East Central Africa; over half a million in South Africa (exclusive of the dominion governed from the Cape); a million and a half in Rhodesia, and three millions in the Sudan.

Now Labour says that it is not right that these human beings should have their lives directed by strings pulled in Whitehall. We have acquired practically the whole of this African Empire between 1880 and 1900. It was the outcome of that virulent attack of economic imperialism which has, unfortunately, affected most of the great powers of Europe during the past thirty years or so. Chamberlain the greater was, of course, the outstanding exponent of this imperialism, and he quite frankly admitted that the acquisitions were mainly of an economic value, in order to provide the markets with the products of British industry, to provide sources of raw materials, and a profitable field of investments for British capital. In other words, we were out to exploit these tropical possssions for the benefit of British capital.

The Empire in Africa offers, perhaps, the best possible ground-work for the study of the principles of retrogression in Government, and the principles of Labour in Government, that we could find in the whole of our Empire. There are two distinct policies in Africa which, for the purpose of convenience, may be described as the African policy and the European policy. In broad terms, the former favours the preservation of native rights in the land, and the development of native possessions. The European policy favours the economic development of the country by European

syndicates and European money, these governments 'hiring' forced native labour to do their work.

Let us, for a moment, glance at the latter system. In the first place, it confines the native population into 'reserves,' and gives to that population no sort of opening even within those reserves. Outside these barriers it permits European companies or individuals to come in and take leases upon immense areas of land. It permits these syndicates to make the natives work for them on practically no wage. It closes its eyes entirely to any effort to encourage the native population either in the direction of acquiring education, or in the way of developing the land which through many generations has belonged to them. It ignores any hope of creating self-respecting races of African producers with a security of tenure of the land, and, instead, looks upon the native as a likely gate through which to recruit servile labourers who will work to create interest upon European capital.

Labour can have nothing to do with this policy. It is entirely retrograde, it is arrogant, it is the rough-shod selfish method of autocracy, and obviously is antagonistic to Labour's policy of service for the majority.

Now the African policy aims at the development of the native's interests. It applies practically all over West Central Africa, with its four hundred and forty-five thousand square miles of territory. It assists the native population to develop the resources of the land by growing crops and gathering products for export. Where European capital is introduced there is a laudable effort to confine its operations within limits which do not infringe the opportunities and the progress of

the native people. It is true that it permits licences to be issued to the European merchant for the collection of forest products (but these are definitely fixed for a term of years not exceeding ten), and that the native communities are consulted as to the issue of these licences and are granted a portion of the fees.

In regard to actual cultivation there is a limit of one square mile per applicant put upon the amount of land which can be leased to Europeans, with the very wise proviso that no group of persons is enabled to hold more than three square miles. The idea behind all this is quite obvious. It is that the land belongs to the natives who have so long inhabited it, and that the coming of the white man should have the effect not of stealing the benefits of that land, but of seeking to uplift the native and make his own possessions worth more.

Before considering what Labour's idea of dealing with these problems would be, let us, for a moment, glance at the results of the two policies upon labour and the social conditions of the population, and as to the economic developments of the territories. Those who support the European policy say that, if the natives are left alone, they have not the experience, nor the capital, nor the initiative properly to develop their possessions to the general good of the world. The natives, they say, are indolent, and, unless outside influence and capital is introduced, much product, for which the world is in need, will lie fallow. You would be amazed at the number of intelligent Britishers who unhesitatingly swallow this argument, and unblushingly repeat it. But the facts are entirely against them. The Labour Party has collected, and has issued,

reports which throw a strange and striking light upon the subject.

It is beyond question that the native can beat the white man, that is if the native receives reasonable encouragement from the administration. In Nigeria, in West Africa, we have the African policy in operation. The native communities work their own land as free men. They cultivate, gather, and sell to European markets, palm-kernels, cocoa, cotton, rubber, ground-nuts, and other things. In British East Africa, and Nyassaland, the most fertile land has been alienated to European companies who employ the natives to produce cotton, hides, skins, coffee, oil, copra, ground-nuts, etc., and a comparison between the exports of these territories shows that the results of the African policy compare quite favourably with the other.

African Policy

	Area, sq: miles	Population in 1,000's.	Exports 1913, in £'s.	Exports per head of population.
Nigeria, ..	336,000	16,500	7,352,377	£0 8 10
Gold Coast	80,000	1,500	5,427,106*	3 12 0
Gambia ..	4,500	200	867,187*	4 5 0
Sierra Leone	24,195	1,403	1,731,252	1 3 0

European Policy

B. East Africa	246,322	2,800	1,039,252*	0 7 1
Nyassaland	39,573	1,200	234,317	0 2 0

*Excluding bullion and specie.

It is, of course, true that the natural wealth of British tropical Western Africa is far greater than that of East Africa. But when due weight has been given to this fact it is clear from these figures

that the economic exploitation of African territory under the African Policy is more successful than under the European Policy.

But, of course, there is an obviously more important side to this problem than the mere export figures. These may, or should indicate a certain prosperity among the natives, but Labour would be far more concerned with the result of Government upon the social conditions of the people. The immediate result of the European policy has been to reproduce in a certain form, on African soil, the same labour problems that we have at home. The Europeans have come in, taken vast tracts of land, and pushed the natives into confined areas. Even in these areas the natives have no title, and may be pushed on like so many sheep.

One gets examples of white men who have suddenly come into possession, through their capital, of tracts of land upon which the homesteads of hundreds of natives have hitherto been located. The natives have to go, Capital wins. This, of course, creates discontent, which is only added to by the fact that the white man immediately imposes taxes upon the natives, which taxes can only be paid by the native undertaking to work for the white man and so earning money. The interested will at once answer that all labour in British East Africa is free; there is no slavery. But these people conveniently forget the taxes which the native is forced to pay, and which he can only pay by what really amounts to slavery in the white man's interest. How else could he pay them? He has no other means of earning money, unless it could be by the sale of commodities. But the white man has taken his land. How,

therefore, can he grow things which are marketable ? So he has to sell his labour. For what little land is left to the native is overcrowded to the point of overflowing.

There is another subtle law in Nyassaland, which is that the native who stays at home pays double the tax that the employee is called upon to pay. If this is not forcing the native to work for the white man I don't know what is. I should say that increased tax acts as a veritable recruiting sergeant for the army of labourers under the white man.

There is also what is known as moral suasion. One finds the police going with the tax collector, and one knows of appeals to the chiefs who, for the favour of the white man and so that they shall not undermine their own authority, put a form of compulsion upon their subjects.

The European, you see, in tropical Africa, is not built to work the land himself, but must get native labour, and the moment the native is not looked upon as the rightful owner he is a predestined labourer in the interests of Europeans. It is easy to understand that compulsion in various forms is sooner or later applied.

And so you get a sullen and unresponsive community. Punishments in the shape of fines and floggings constantly occur. These things naturally lead to uprisings, with the inevitable loss of life and calling in of the military.

It has also, unfortunately, to be admitted that sanitary and moral conditions are not so good under the white man's rule as they are in the native settlements, where the chiefs of the community are the rulers of the community. The physical conditions of the labourers deteriorate. The

natives do not get as good food as they did in their own villages. Disease is very prevalent, and it is to be feared that the Government consider their responsibilities ended when they send an inspector to see that the contract rates of pay are observed. Do you blame the native that he idles? Can you blame him that he talks in corners of sedition? and that his love for the British is not fostered? It is difficult to blame him if he deserts, which, in some parts of Africa, is a criminal offence. Can you not readily understand there is a grave danger to-day of insurrection?

As against this it is good to admit that, where the African policy has been allowed to exist, one sees the native communities working their own land as free men, living in comfort and in harmony under their chiefs, and themselves governing themselves in their own country.

Now, both in regard to Africa and other dependencies, Labour has its principles, and the first one is that there should be no economic exploitation of the natives by the white man. We shall look upon the native as a free man; we shall endeavour to acquire for him the opportunity of development, and to retain for him the economic resources of his own land. The land will, under us, be treated as the property of the native community or communities. We shall bring in Acts of Parliament to make their tenure secure. We shall legislate definitely against alienation of land to Europeans. Where expensive machinery, expert advice, etc., are required we, as the Government, will supply the necessary capital and necessary instruction, so that the best may be obtained in the way of products.

If any concessions of land are made to Europeans

they must be in the shape of short time leases, and granted with the consent of the native community, and then only in restricted areas.

Mines, railways, and any monopolies should be run by the State for the community as a whole. We shall have no slave-trading. We shall have no pawning of persons, as is permitted at present, for this *is* slavery. The prohibition of compulsory labour will be absolute, and all voluntary labour must be paid by a wage in cash to the labourer himself, and not to any tribal chief, who shall be stripped of all power to call out those under him in order to provide, under pressure, an army of workers for any white man.

Taxation should be the same for all, whether they work for themselves or for Europeans. It may be said that, in the beginning, this will make labour scarce and no doubt it will. It will put up the price of it, perhaps, but not unreasonably, and, if the attractions offered are sufficient, free labour will, in the end, be as sufficient as forced labour is now.

The whole system of Government will have to be altered. At the present time a Governor is appointed by the Crown. There is then appointed an Executive Council, composed of officials, and a Legislative Council, nominated by the Government, and composed mostly of officials. Those that do not fall under that heading are representatives of European commerce, as a rule. Laws are made by the Government, though, on occasions, natives are allowed a certain number of nominees. These responsibilities all the time rest with the Colonial Office, and the native's voice goes unheard, and the native's quite legitimate aspirations are unvoiced.

Labour would aim at the establishment of a genuine representative of the natives upon the Councils and, as education progressed, a deepening of the responsibilities of government. This might first operate through local government in small areas, and apply to the supervision of sanitation, roads, and education, and would ultimately lead up to the development of a responsible Government for the whole country. Eventually the general interests of such dependencies as these would come under the eye of the League of Nations.

In the African colonies, of all needs the one most paramount is that of education. We have nowhere in Africa made a serious attempt to give the African knowledge which would make him capable of understanding and controlling the circumstances that the Government imposes upon him. It is to be feared that the natives have been deliberately kept uneducated and ignorant, in the hope that they may more easily be used for the benefit of the white man.

In Nigeria the revenue was two million eight hundred and thirty thousand pounds sterling—the expenditure on education was forty-six thousand. In British East Africa the revenue was three hundred and twenty-six thousand—the cost of education one thousand two hundred and fifty—the wage of a good many middle-class men. It is our principle that Government under Labour rule shall aim at conditions in which the native will take his place as a free man in the economic system, utilising for himself the riches of his own country, and taking his place as a free citizen. To this end education is the first essential among our many duties to these fellow-subjects of ours. Primary education must be established;

training colleges must be provided; an African university should be an immediate object. Let us not seek what we can make out of these millions of fellow human beings, but let us rather ask ourselves what we can do to make their life fuller and more independent, and more worth living. Let us not extract all we can, but let us give them the results of our own education. For one thing, let us provide doctors, giving them a sanitary service adequate to fight the musquito, the tsetse fly, and so breaking down the great barrier of native ignorance and superstition, and so irrigate this breeding-ground of plague and disease.

Labour's aim will be to civilise, not to exploit the African.

CHAPTER XII

INDIA

It is doubtful if any international question presents so many difficulties as that of the government of India. Here again we have strings running all the way from Whitehall to the far east, and pulling the reins of control.

The Indian people themselves have practically no voice in the matter of their own destinies. We know recently that they have tried to impress their will upon the officials—hence the terrible events of Amritsar. But the fact that a British general was convinced it was right to fire upon a body of natives in a meeting, shows—whatever the rights or wrongs of that particular episode may be—that there is a very big dissatisfaction on the part of the natives as to the way they are governed, and a very genuine failure on the part of the governors, seeing that it needs such show of force in order to impress their judgments upon the people whom they rule.

India is a very complicated problem. It contains, for instance, roughly one-fifth of the human population of the earth, and it is easy to understand that a few gentlemen sitting in Whitehall cannot, with any degree of success, rule 315,000,000 souls. It is not as though these people were all of one religion, or even all of one tongue. They are themselves divided into many races. There are no fewer than 180 distinct languages spoken in

India, some of which are as diverse as Russian and English. They have nine quite dominating religions, ranging from Hinduism to Christianity. There are 2000 castes, none of whom may intermarry with the other. Probably 70,000,000 of these people are under the rule of Indian princes who owe their religions to the British Empire. The remainder are governed by officials who have their impetus and origins in Whitehall.

The task for the future is, how can all these different and varying people be brought together in unity, and carry on their own government?

The Parliamentary control of India does not date back a very long way. If we go back far enough we find the East India Company seeking to create trade connections among numerous tribes busily engaged in fighting each other. The Company employed force to combat this, and thus a great part of the country was conquered and placed under some sort of discipline. Then in 1858 the Company was abolished, and Parliament assumed direct control in India. That is how India came under our rule, and though with the best intentions, no doubt, in the world, we set out to govern the country for the good of the Indians, it certainly did happen that, through officers being appointed, and through the Company being disbanded, committees that used to keep a watchful eye on the administration of the country ceased to exist also, and Parliament began to lose track of Indian affairs, and ceased to understand them.

I am not seeking to criticise these officers who ruled on behalf of this country. There have been many able and upright men who dispensed justice, kept the peace, made almost interminable railways and roads, carried out great irrigation schemes

over millions of acres, and indeed acquitted the country in a thoroughly modern manner. The great fault that crept in, however, was that these officials never made any effort to train the native himself to do this work for himself. With perhaps a touch of arrogant superiority, the white man, who did these things, very likely, at the back of his mind, had the notion that he was helping the natives, but he never looked upon his dark-skinned brother as his kin, and never sought to teach him those principles of government, of citizenship, and of service to the State which might have made him, in the end, able to dispense with outside administration and, incidentally, with outside capital.

India ought to become a self-governing dominion within a British Commonwealth, and under Labour it would be given every opportunity of development to this end. I know it could not happen quickly. I am not suggesting that, if a Labour Government be elected to-morrow, the government of India in London would cease the next day. One has to educate. But what I do say is that we have not shaped any policy at all to this end. We have, I know, established a system of education on Western lines up to a degree, and I think five or six per cent of the people can now read and write their own language. Two persons out of every 300 can speak English, and—let me underline this—you must understand that *English is the only language in which the government of India can be conducted.* It is not as though among the educated classes of natives there are not sufficient Indians to take over some sort of control. There are. And, of course, Lord Morley, in 1909, recognised this when he allowed members to be

elected to the Legislative Councils. They were only given a voice, and no power, because Government retained always the majority of members, which means the voting power. And even he, when he carried out this reform, refused to acknowledge that he had as a goal the establishment of self-government. Truly we have got one stage beyond that now, because as a result of the Hindus and the Mohammedans joining forces in 1916, Mr Montague definitely asserted that responsible government was now the goal of British policy in India. His report, however, did not carry this out.

It is a fact that, at the moment, there would be very few people in India among the natives who would understand the significance of the power to vote. This means that responsible government, as in Canada and in the other colonies, could not be arranged just now. But what we would do—and this is the essence of the problem—would be to create real electorates, and, in order to do this, we would gradually develop the limited powers of local government in the provinces, increasing these powers as the natives became experienced and efficient in the arts of government. This is an integral part of the Labour policy with regard to all Colonies and Dependencies. We wish to secure to the natives in all parts of our dominions effective protection against the excess of capitalist colonisation, and we wish to create, in all these dependencies, a system of Home Rule, so soon as the degree of civilisation can be attained which will make it possible.

CHAPTER XIII

IRELAND

And if we can see our way to give freedom to the African and Indian native, what of Ireland?

The history of Ireland is a tragedy of errors. If we go back far enough the trouble lies, perhaps, in the fact that, when the Normans conquered England, they divided up the country and left Ireland. If only they had finished the job we might have seen some sort of unity among the race who occupies both Great Britain and Ireland, but the Irish were, at that time, left alone, and then began the separation which the succeeding generations have made more and more definite.

But to come to more recent times, if this country had only kept faith with such Nationalists as Parnell and Redmond, the present terrible, indeed tragic situation could never have arisen. For how long did the Liberals in Parliament get the support of the Irish Nationalists? And why? Because through constitutional methods the Irish hoped, at the instigation of the Liberals, to obtain Home Rule. The cry for that is as old as my memory of politics. It takes us back to Gladstone, and, if we think in a detached way of the matter, it is inconceivable to think that we have, to-day, an army in Ireland whose chief duty it is to keep the Irish from realising their very natural ambition of attaining self-government.

The Irish have a genuine complaint. They

have been made, for many years, the hub of a political controversy, of mere political intrigue; the battleground of party politics.

When one talks of the settling of the Irish question, the first difficulty always to be mentioned is, of course, the Ulster Orangemen. It would be a very foolish man who attempted to solve that Irish problem and ignored that there was also an Ulster problem. But before considering it, do not let us forget that the very strong feeling—almost amounting to bitterness and hatred—that exists to-day in many parts of the north-east of Ulster is due to the machinations of responsible politicians.

It would be a very simple matter for me to give extracts from the speeches of these responsible statesmen, occupying the highest positions in the land, which show them to be guilty of nothing short of treason. And, if one connects these speeches with an already inflamed people, it is easy to understand the antagonism and suspicion that exists.

One does instinctively condemn the outrages and murders that have taken place of late in Ireland, and there is no man worthy of the name of Labour Leader who would not condemn them because of their brutality and wickedness, and I would like to point out to these Sinn Feiners that, while one understands how far these responsible statesmen of England have almost justified the inflamed feelings which they express, the malcontents must remember that murder and outrage is a method that never has succeeded, and never will succeed in all this world's history.

The Curragh episode, which resulted in important generals refusing to obey the King's

regulations, struck almost a fatal blow to discipline and constitutional government, and from that, and other incidents prior and subsequent, the present state of Ireland can be traced. But, even allowing for this, I am firmly convinced that the feeling of apprehension of the Ulster people must be considered.

Writing at a moment when things are in a state of flux, when it is difficult to see just which way the road is bending, I do not hesitate to say that, if the provocation is sufficiently severe, the Ulster men unquestionably will fight, not constitutionally through the ballot boxes, but literally with the bayonet. Whether this suddenly flares up, or whether it is a danger that will come to a head in the future, it must not be taken that I mean any Government should allow themselves to be bullied or browbeaten into taking action with what they do not feel is legitimate policy, because of a threat. In fact, it must be obvious to any impartial observer that, if it is right of the Government not to submit to a threat from the Sinn Feiners, it is not right that they should submit to a threat from the Ulster men. That logic is unanswerable.

We have got to get a much more detached view of the whole question. We have got to forget Carson, indeed to sink all personalities, and see if we cannot apply to Ireland the general principles we would apply to other dependencies. Our signatures are on the Peace Treaty, are they not? And there we have made a fine gesture before the world in favour of the small peoples. The little fellows are to have the same independence as the big ones. A man shall run his small garden as much in accordance with his own desires as the owner of the mansion and the hundred acres.

Then how can we browbeat Ireland into submission to our views, while, at the same time we trample in jackboots across his flower beds ?

Ireland is a nation, and the Irish should decide their own destiny, and choose and get up in peace their own government. If they have to wait until Labour comes into power, they will have to wait only that long before they get their freedom.

I do not think a republic would be right. I believe that is not a necessary part of the granting of freedom to that country. I am against it, and I believe the great masses of people are against it, both in this country and in Ireland. Why could not a plebiscite be taken on the question. This has been done in other countries, and it seems to me we might accord to our neighbours the liberty we grant to far away Silicia.

I shall, no doubt, be answered with the assertion that the Irish are split themselves—and so they are. But the political opportunists in Parliament have done their best to exaggerate and perpetuate this division of opinion. No really honest and generous effort has been made to unite the Irish, yet I have reason for the hope that unity, to a certain and sufficient degree, could be obtained.

The railwaymen in Ireland are united. Here you have men of both the north and south joining together in one industrial organisation. There are no differences between them, and, in this matter of their daily jobs, the religious note, so prominent in politics, does not intrude.

I know the Irish are a peculiar race. They are very lovable and very charming. One will find in their houses a Sinn Feiner, a Unionist, a Catholic, and a Protestant mixing in perfect amity, dining together and being in agreement on most things,

on as many things as you would find the average dinner party in the average English house. Yet, to-morrow, the Sinn Feiner and the Unionist will be firing at each other from behind barricades! It would be comic if it did not happen to be tragic.

Still, my hope is that, if we withdraw the irritation provided by the jackboot, Ireland will work out its salvation through industrial association rather than through political propaganda. In business all shades of political and religious thought mix at ease, and that is the reason I think the Trades Union and the Labour Party will be able to do what the heated and more biased political parties have failed in. The majority should decide, and, of course, there must be safeguards for the liberty of minorities.

As a start I would grant dominion Home Rule. Ulster? Ulster, too, should make her own choice. Why not? But one thing I would insist upon. If Ulster voted not to accept an all-Irish Parliament, they would remain under the British Parliament, that's all, until such time as they cared to change.

I would never recognise Ireland as two nations with two Parliaments. How could you? Look at the map. Its interests must be the same; it is so compact, so complete a country. It would be wrong to permit its partition. There would be only four counties who would vote to remain under British rule, even to-day, and one would have a reasonable hope that, when a beneficial system of government by an Irish Parliament had been running for a little time, unity of the race would result. Ireland must be a nation, and then her people will prosper.

It has been argued that, if Ireland does become a nation, with her own Parliament and power,

therefore, to make her own laws, she would set up a tariff wall against us, and the danger of her nearness has been pointed at in case she made any association with other and possible enemy countries.

People who make this assertion have not studied the actual conditions of our business relations with Ireland. If we look at the normal returns of her imports and exports to us and from us, we shall discover that the figures practically balance. This rather seems to make an end of any reasonable move on Ireland's part, should she be a power under herself, to fight us in the way of protections.

There is another point, too, perhaps even more important, that would keep her in the straight path-of-free-trade that is. It is the fact that Ireland is dependent on us for her coal, and you must remember that at present coal is easily the most important element in manufactures. Some might say that America can supply Ireland with coal. To-day she might, but, in anything like normal conditions, Ireland would have only one economic source of supplies, and that would be England.

One more factor there is—a social one, perhaps the most important of all—which makes me believe in a possibility of better understanding between the divergent minds in Ireland. I refer to the inter-marrying between North and South, and the many Irishmen there are in England with their families. If there were no possibility of peace among the factions in Ireland, we should have to believe that there is no domestic felicity in Ireland, for the opposing groups inter-marry freely, and, presumably, are able to sink their political differences in the larger effort of household management.

Again, the suggestion that the Irish people in England are all filled with bitter hatred towards the English is mere moonshine. All that they have is a pride in nationality and—I grant you this—a hatred for what has been misgovernment, and for the arrogant gesture that comes from Dublin Castle, a gesture both in London and in Dublin which has stifled every legitimate aspiration of the Irish people.

I may be told that the results of the 1920 elections disprove my view concerning an Irish republic. If I could believe that was the considered judgment of the Irish people, it would indeed be conclusive evidence, but it must be clearly kept in mind that the past eighteen months has created a very effective appeal to the Irish people to vote on the broad national plane—'Ireland, A Nation'—and I assert, with knowledge, that there are not only large masses of moderate people who are not in favour of a republic, but who, by the blundering of the Government, and the mishandling of the Irish situation, have found themselves crushed. Many responsible persons, with influence and power, have in effect said to me: 'If we could only be satisfied that we were not being further humbugged and tricked, and if we could only believe that a real attempt was to be made to do justice to Ireland, we would have some basis of appeal in the country, of using what influence and power we have, and you would find the extremists would be greatly in the minority.'

Since, so far, all efforts made by any political party have failed, it might, with justice, be asked of the Labour Party what steps it would take in order to settle Ireland, to give it peace and prosperity. My first endeavour would be to establish—what

really is the first essential to the solution—a better atmosphere. I would invite both the Sinn Feiners and Ulstermen to join the organised workers of Ireland in a frank and open discussion of the situation. I can see the bigoted gentlemen smiling at the suggestion, and thinking they would not come, these varying factions. But I know they would come. And it is because we have proved in our trade union meetings that these apparently hostile forces will meet around the conference table in perfect amity, and not each for his own narrow interests, I am confident that, with the right atmosphere, they would foregather to settle this more national problem. It is because so many of them do not believe in the promises that have been made to them, and that, therefore, they are so suspicious of any overture from anywhere, that hesitation might be expected in this suggested discussion. But I do want to say that no one is at heart more anxious for a solution than those who are at the head of the Sein Fein movement. They are not fools. They are men who love their country, and are prepared to make great sacrifices for it. But they also know that the present state of affairs cannot continue. They know that nothing would be so foolish as a rising against the military, and, whilst retaining their claim and wielding the power and influence they do, they would certainly welcome a real effort to end this long, bitter, and tragic chapter in our own as well as Ireland's history.

It is unquestionable that the British people, or, at least the large majority of them, not having any personal knowledge of Ireland or the Irish, look upon them as hopeless and violent imbeciles. They have not worried to understand how the

present position has grown up, and they certainly do not give the Sein Fein any credit for moderation or any sense of justice. These people would be amazed if they had the opportunity of examining the system which is being adopted by the heads, of trying their own cases in their own courts. The way these cases have been handled proves beyond all shadow of doubt the fact that those responsible for the Sein Fein direction are utterly and completely opposed to crime. They punish their own members severely, and with impartiality if they have outraged what the courts consider justice. When, moreover, the officials have considered it part of their plans to seize the mails, I am told that no one has suffered pecuniary loss. After the mails have been searched postal orders and cheques are never interfered with, but are sent on to their proper recipients, and this, at least, is evidence that they are not a set of brigands, as most people in England seem to imagine.

CHAPTER XIV

FINANCE

The first and most important thing to remember when dealing with the finances of the country, especially in regard to the individual, is the ability to pay. You must not over-tax a man; you must not over-tax an industry; or it will rebound against the community to every one's hurt. We have a most enormous debt, as we all know. Eight thousand millions won't bear thinking about; and we need not think about it. What we have got to meet is the immediate bill, and that is the Budget.

Well, our Budget for some time may be over a thousand millions sterling—more than five times what it was before the War. How are we going to obtain this money? No Chancellor of the Exchequer has ever had such a serious problem put before him. We must admit that, even though we are, some of us, thoroughly convinced that most of the taxation is fundamentally wrong.

Personally, I can see no permanent justification for the excess profits tax. When it was originally put on it was bad. But it had to be done in order to meet a terrible emergency. Ultimately, it must, of course, disappear, because it puts a handicap upon all business, and is, in fact, an anchor on the ship of State. It is also a direct incentive to 'ca'-canny,' and destroys initiative. Still, the money must be found, and the only alternative I can see is a capital levy.

There is tremendous opposition to this, I know, but then one would not anticipate that people with capital would submit without a word to a levy being made upon it. They say, with some truth, why should they have their money taken from them because they have been sufficiently industrious and thrifty to make and to save it, whereas the spendthrift, who is not of equal value to the community, goes practically, if not entirely, free? It is true that the drones are no good in the hives, and it is true that the thrifty man is of more value to the country than the spendthrift, because he lends out his money and so develops business.

You can never get equality of sacrifice. For the moment, and from a national point of view, it is a matter of business, and let us view it entirely as a business proposition. Suppose a man is left an estate heavily mortgaged. He has two alternatives as to what to do with that estate. He can go on year after year paying interest on the mortgage, and, perhaps, being able to reduce the original amount slightly as well. It is a stone round his neck probably for his lifetime, and he, no doubt, would consider himself fortunate if he could clear the debt in time for his sons, or his next of kin, to inherit the estate free.

But the other thing he can do is to say: 'I am going to cut off a corner of this estate and sell it to Mr Smith. Half if necessary. Mr Smith will give me so much for it—that is its proper value. With that money I can pay off the mortgage on the remainder of the ground, and so I shall be free.' Well, as a commercial proposition, there is no doubt it is the better course to pursue. Sell what is necessary, and clear yourself.

It is the same way with a capital tax. We have a tremendous debt to clear. A capital levy, on a reasonable percentage, would probably realise a thousand millions sterling. No other interest to pay upon that thousand millions any longer, and every tax-payer in the country would feel the immediate benefit of that. How would it be done? Suppose there are no more Mr Smiths to buy your plot of ground! It is all very well, people say, to tell us we have diamonds, or other valuables, and we must sell them. Who is going to buy? You cannot have sellers without buyers.

That is perfectly true, but what the argument omits, in this particular case, is that the vast proportion of this huge debt is owned by the State itself, and to raise a levy would, in a large measure, merely mean cancelling the State's debt to the individual. What I mean is this: Suppose I own one hundred thousand pounds, and am told that out of that I must pay twenty-five thousand pounds as a levy from my fortune. What the State does is to take twenty-five thousand pounds' of War stock that I hold and cancel it. It is only tearing up a few scraps of paper after all, because, of course, the whole debt is one of paper. When the next dividend day comes round, I get no interest on that twenty-five thousand pounds of holding, and the Exchequer has so much less revenue to find.

Apart from this exceptional emergency there will, when Labour comes into power, I hope be only one tax—income-tax. We stand absolutely for the entire abolition of all indirect taxation. You will not help the exchequer of the country by paying more for your wine, or your cigars, or your sugar, or anything. You will know exactly

what you are paying, because you pay it direct, and in no roundabout way. It is far better for the people to know what they have to pay, and while, of course, they will make an equivalent saving on the goods they buy, because prices will at once fall tremendously, they would have increased that sense of responsibility towards the State which a genuine realisation of their contribution towards the State must inevitably bring.

I have been asked what the amount of the income-tax is likely to be. Of course it cannot be answered. Conditions change, and the upheaval of the War has made costly difficulties which will disappear in due course. But I do think by this one simple, straightforward method of taxation a lot of unnecessary overlapping in the work of various departments will be saved, and this will affect, in the end, the amount that has to be paid. It is doubtful if it will go any higher than it is to-day to the average man, though, of course, we should insist upon the extremely wealthy man paying a much greater proportion than he does now.

I should apply this direct taxation even to houses, and make the tenant pay direct rather than through the landlord. It develops citizenship, and brings home to every one a consciousness of their necessary contribution and their liability to the State.

Death duties would remain—very much so! There is no more justifiable source of income than these, and we should considerably increase those at present ruling. I want to justify death duties on the strongest possible grounds, and one of these grounds, which is not always thought of, is the curtailment and limitation of brain ability which follows the easy position of inherited wealth.

Whatever may be said for the man who has

acquired wealth by his own individual effort and brain, there is nothing to be said for that wealth being made the medium of preventing his son or sons giving the nation the benefit of their brains. Dozens of instances could be collected supporting the fact that this does happen. How could it be otherwise? A young man of twenty finds himself in possession of an enormous fortune. The chances are that he slacks and lazes, and the certainty is that he does not develop and expand his abilities as he very likely would if he had the prod of having to earn his own livelihood. It is that that makes a man strive for development, and improvement, and advancement, and it is that striving which makes the world go round.

So we shall increase the death duties enormously, and one effect, no doubt, will be to make men hoard their money less and use it more, though everything, of course, is gradually shaping towards a more equal distribution of money, so that we shall not have so many very wealthy men, but, instead, very many more men comfortably off.

If we take the principle I set out with in this chapter—the ability to pay—and apply it here, who has a greater ability to pay a tax, however high, than the man who hasn't yet but will come by chance into possession of the very money that is to be taxed?

It would have the inevitable effect of breaking up some of the big estates, but that would not matter very much except to a very few individuals. Experience, to sum the matter up, has proved that, despite the very considerable opposition that was originally put up when the death duties were first introduced, they have proved in their working a really satisfactory tax.

When we think of finance, it is rather interesting to speculate on the chances of one day establishing a world-wide currency. It is a possibility that, perhaps, is not so far off as some people suspect. With the League of Nations possible, with it very much further developed than it is to-day, and with a complete representation from other nations upon it, I don't see any real difficulty, or any insurmountable difficulty, in establishing the same coinage all over the world—at all events, shall we say, for the moment, all over Europe, where in the main the coinage is a gold one. This would obliterate the exchanges on foreign countries, which have caused such havoc since the armistice. Incidentally, too, they have caused a good deal of gambling, and that is not a good thing. Our money has gone abroad to buy German marks, and that is much worse than ordinary stock-exchange speculation, because, even though the gambling element is there, the money is, as a rule, being used in the development of business.

To cut out the exchanges would be a very big thing, and would vastly simplify international business relationships. There would be the British sovereign, which would be of the same value in every country in Europe, that is if they took the English coinage as the one that would be adopted. I should think probably a new coinage would be created, working on the metric system. But still, that is a detail.

The League of Nations would become bankers. They would hold the gold as the Bank of England does to-day, and would issue to each country notes against their holding. These notes would be used, of course, for business. It would be possible to arrange credits for countries on a

percentage system of their holding. Whatever the banks can do now, that bank could do, either through the existing banking organisation, or through some other system which could be created. It would certainly simplify business relations between one country and another, and to simplify things means to improve them, to cut out waste and to make for efficiency.

But, you might object, you must have exchanges, because a pound will buy more labour in, shall we say, Belgium, than it will in, shall we say, Birmingham. That is perfectly true, and, until that is changed, you could not have an international currency.

It ought to be changed. Why should we not have a more equal standard of wages all over Europe? When Labour is in power, not only here but in other countries, it seems to me quite feasible that the railwayman, or the bricklayer, or the miner, should be able to demand the same standard of wages and of living, whether he works in England, or whether he works in France, or in Rumania. These reforms, if they could be accomplished—and I am only throwing it out here in quite a speculative way—would help to stabilise the world in general, as well as to balance up the benefits of life among all human beings.

There is another side of the nation's finances I would like to touch upon. It is the instinctive antagonism of the average business man to the notion of Labour being in power.

That great and useful community, comprised of business men as apart from wage earners or the professional classes, seems to think that we should at once cheerily seize their money and their connections and divert all the proceeds to some

sort of sharing out scheme among the manual labourers. That, of course, is the result of ignorance. I wish business men would drop their instinctive hostility to our principles, and spend a little time in studying our aims. There is, of course, a sphere for the business man in every state of society. There is a very real *raison d'être* for the financier. True it is that what is generally called high finance has been the medium for abuses, especially in America before Roosevelt made his great attack upon 'big business.' But because on occasions—alas! too often—the public has been badly gulled and fleeced by the business financier, it does not follow that genuine financial operations are not of benefit to the general community. They are.

Money must come from somewhere to make work possible, and it is only the extremist, who is a man with warped enthusiasm and narrow inspiration, who wants to seize the nation's works and money and valuables and distribute them among those of his own kind. That is not a Labour programme. It is anarchy. And we will have nothing to do with anarchy. That is where critics like the Duke of Northumberland go astray. He has asserted that determined effort was being made to ensure unity of action with the railwaymen and transport workers in Ireland and those in England, and the miners were to co-operate by a fresh agitation for an increase of wages. All this was to be supported by the Russian Bolsheviks. In Ireland, too, parties which were working, the one for national independence, and the other for a world-wide revolution, were in alliance. They were also in alliance with national socialism. They were working in England with

various Labour organisations, who again were in close touch with the Soviet Government. He knew also that 'there was the closest intimacy between all these parties and the Nationalist movement in India and in Egypt. It was a world-wide conspiracy aimed at the destruction of the British Empire.'

We do not aim to destroy the British Empire. We aim to change its Government, so that there shall be no chance of uprising, and so that peace and justice, and not autocracy, shall govern us. Such loose talk as I have quoted does a lot of harm. That the Duke of Northumberland was erroneous is shown by the fact that his remarks, connecting us with the Bolshevik rulers of Russia, were made only a little after the Trade Union Congress had given a decided vote against the attendance at the Moscow International. I am afraid he is, like many others, merely striving to create a panic against Labour by making assertions which have no foundation in fact.

The only revolution we aim at is already here. It has nothing to do with machine guns. It has to do with the control of affairs. We want to control them—we mean to control them—because for too long Labour has been exploited for the good of the few.

That does not mean that Labour wishes to exploit capital. Let us look at this question of the financier. Who and what is he? You can divide him under two headings.

Let us take the man who provides capital for the development of the business. No one could suggest for a moment that he was anything other than a desirable and useful citizen, rendering a great service to the community. To suggest that

a man occupying that position is a parasite is, of course, playing with the subject.

But, on the other hand, let us take the other man, not a financier, but a mere speculator, whose service is limited to Stock Exchange booming, to the rigging of the financial market, and who gives nothing to, but who invariably draws very largely from, the community, often creating both misery and suffering. Here is a very clear distinction between the two definitions of a financier.

Now I suppose that for a very long time to come, even under a Labour Government, it will be necessary to retain the Stock Exchange. But I certainly hope that there would not be such a feeling for exploiting people as now exists. The mere rigging of the market, with the artificial inflation of prices which inevitably follows, does an incalculable amount of harm.

The recent operations in Lancashire in cotton are the best evidence as to the danger whereby a quite artificial and abnormal price was paid for shares, clearly the result of manipulation, and, remember, from these inflated prices dividends must be earned, or a break must come with its concomitant unemployment and financial losses.

It is reasonable to ask how one could regulate these things. It could be—and should be—the duty of a State Department to satisfy itself as to operations in this land. Neither watered stock, nor financial jugglery, should be allowed to exist, and a Government Department should check what was a legitimate exchange of the transfer of business and what was mere unhealthy speculation, unwise and dangerous, because in these matters it is not the people who know most who suffer—they invariably get out before the crash comes.

It is only too often the innocent victims who are left.

This raises, too, the very interesting question of what is a reasonable return for capital. Here, no fixed rule or principle can be applied for many obvious reasons. There are many more risks in some businesses than in others. If one man invests £100 in a business which is risky—say, the obtaining of Spanish gold from somewhere in South Seas—he is taking a much greater risk on his money than the man who puts £100 into a grocery store. It is right that, if the greater risk comes off, there would be a greater return. It is necessary, before any regulations could be drawn up on this line, that the whole subject should be much further explored, but it can be stated that any legislation which Labour might be called upon to frame would be based upon the policy that the first charge upon any business would be in the interests of labour. That has the first claim. After that a reasonable return should be allowed for capital.

And then? Well, then, we come to the many schemes of co-partnership and profit-sharing.

I can think of nothing at this moment that for so long has been so strongly opposed by the working classes as profit-sharing. It is only fair, however, that whatever may be said of the principles which underlie the scheme, it is the manner in which it was introduced which rendered it anathema to the working classes. There is no doubt, and indeed it has never been denied, that the intention by the particular company which did introduce it, was to smash trade unionism. It was brought in in the midst of a strike, and it was the panacea put forward to defeat trade unionism.

Is it, therefore, surprising that every suggestion

along these lines is at once suspect from Labour's point of view? It is perfectly true that there are places, like the Lever Bros. works and others, where profit-sharing schemes have been introduced, and which have had none of the tainted elements attached to them. Indeed, they run side by side with collective bargaining. It is not any good considering these where we are discussing matters of principle. They are isolated cases, successful, very beneficial, maybe, to the work-people who are affected by them, but, quite frankly, they could not be followed on universal lines, and attached to all businesses, large and small.

For every reason it is obvious that, if you have a profit-sharing scheme, it entails, by the ordinary laws of fair play, a loss-sharing scheme—that is, if the worker agrees with the employer or the capitalist to take a share of the profit, he, surely, must be ready to share in the risk of loss should the business not go well. So you would get a man in a humble walk of life, whose bill at each week-end—and he is not of the class who would get large credits from trades people—for his coal, his food, and his very necessities of life would be contingent upon the success of some business which, by very reason of his job, he could not in any way direct or control. The capitalist risks his money. But that is what he gets his return for, and he must have money and, therefore, be able to take the risk, or he could not be a capitalist, and would be a member of the working classes.

The real solution is fair and equitable conditions, and a frank and full recognition of the principles of collective bargaining—collective bargaining not only by the officials of the big trade unions, but by the local members in their own business

houses consulting with the management on all sorts of conditions in the works, the neglect of which really create more industrial unrest than the big mass questions of wages.

Intimately associated with any question of national finance is the problem of Free Trade. On the surface it ought not to be a problem. Even the supporters of the late Mr Joseph Chamberlain, in his Tariff Reform campaign, would be the first, probably, to admit that universal Free Trade is the right thing, the best thing, the most economic policy we as a race could pursue. The trouble, of course, is complicated, because other countries set up their tariffs. Otherwise, there would never have been one word to be said in favour of any Tariff Reform within our own legislation.

Despite this, I, of course, stand entirely and all the time for absolute Free Trade. The Labour Party will have nothing to do with Protection in any shape or form. And this is not only an economic matter. It is probably the greatest cause of international friction, resulting in strained relations with other countries, and very often in wars. It is only natural that this should be so. If we put a protective duty against the goods of one country, or against the goods that one country produces, and not against the goods that chiefly come from another country, it is natural that the first country should not like us for it. It also provokes that country to seek the friendship of other nations, and so, easily based upon these economic associations, you can make a stepping-stone for political alliances among nations and thus get back to the old stupid position of the balance of power, the narrowness and meanness of which caused the last war.

But, primarily, of course, the question of tariffs is an economic rather than a political factor. The Protectionist says glibly to the working man: 'If we charge a duty upon the importation of certain goods from foreign countries, you will get less competition from abroad, therefore the price of the commodity you make will be higher in consequence of that, so wages will be bigger.' Before the War it was one of the first ideas of the Protectionist platform that their system of tariff wars against the foreigner would solve the unemployment problem. As a matter of fact the expedient has been tried in almost every country under the sun, including our own, at one time or another, and it has never succeeded in curing the trouble of unemployment. At this moment it is particularly opportune to point out this fallacy, because it is likely, during the next phase of the industrial position of the country, that unemployment will prevail. There are so many forces working both from the sides of Capital and Labour, overlapping each other, and affecting the position of employment, that no one can with certainty say what will result, nor how it is possible to obviate the troubles that certainly are threatening. But, if there is unemployment to any extent, of one thing I am certain—Protection will never cure it.

Protection means, in the end, more money in the pockets of the manufacturers of whatever goods are protected. It may certainly be that the unions of the workers in these trades will be able to force a more or less decent wage from the employer, but, if large profits are made in any particular trade behind a tariff barrier, you may be sure that the majority of those profits will go into the hands of the capitalists.

But, of course, this subject is very much larger than that. To wipe out Protection, to establish complete Free Trade eventually, must mean the lowering of the price of goods. To have healthy competition from abroad in our own markets, must, of necessity, mean that the home producer cannot exploit the purchasing public and charge unreasonable prices. The more goods come into the country, the more goods there are to buy, and the cheaper, therefore, they become. For instance, if a man with £1 in his pocket goes to buy a hat, and finds that, because there are so many hats from all sources, the price of a hat has gone down to 15s, he has got 5s over with which to buy a pair of socks, or perhaps a tie. It is obvious that, by doing this, he is creating a greater demand for goods in general. That means more work—less unemployment. But, if you put a tax upon goods coming into this country, that hat, instead of being 15s will be 17s 6d, because of the tax; and if imported goods can only be sold at 17s 6d, the English maker, who really can afford to sell them at 15s, is not going to do anything of the sort—he is going to sell them either at 17s 6d or something more nearly approaching that figure. And so prices are kept up, and demands for goods are kept down.

As a matter of fact, the bogey of unemployment being affected by Protection is easily tracked down. It is really a very thin stream of foreign manufactured goods that comes into this country. It is not more than 5 per cent of the total products used in the country. The other 95 per cent are products of our own effort. And you have got to remember that, even if the manufactured goods do come in, quite a large proportion of them is

merely used for the creation of our own goods.

Let us bring the matter down to an individual company. This company may turn out, shall we say, motor-cars. It may be quite a sound business proposition if they produce everything that is required to make that motor-car. But it is very doubtful if they would find it profitable to set up a glass factory, shall we say, in order to make their wind-screens, simply because it would not pay them to produce the small quantity that they would use. They can buy their glass from outside, just as they can buy the electric-light globes, which light their works, from outside—they don't want to make them. A very good proportion of the goods imported into this country are in the same category as these accessories—very necessary, in fact, entirely essential, but not necessarily hitting in any way our own employment question. It is a fact, you cannot increase the total volume of unemployment by any tariff jugglery, and it is opportune to point out here that the wage-earner should disabuse his mind of any idea that the Protectionist has as his motive the desire to find more work or better wages for him.

The working classes realise—or, if they don't, they should—that if tariffs are not proposed with the object of bringing higher prices and larger profits to capitalists and landlords, the movement would have been still-born, and even the agitation—such as it is—is only engineered by a few who would benefit, because it would be only the particular trades that were protected who would get anything out of them even if *they* did. Unquestionably, Protection cuts right across the path of Labour. By a careful scrutiny of the

figures of unemployment during the last twenty years, you will find that in every country where there is any sort of Protection, unemployment is infinitely greater than it is in those countries where Free Trade, or something near to Free Trade, operates.

If any system of Protection is to be the result of this War, then all the fine professions of ideals for which we fought lie in the dust and are but mockeries. It was a war to end war, and it must not leave behind it a war of peoples in trade, and a competition among diplomats for the obtaining of particular privileges and spheres of influence in this, that, or the other end of the world, which would carry no benefit to workers, but would only be a means of increasing the dividends upon capital. This sort of thing only speeds another war, because, in order to combat these trade interests in various parts of the world, it is necessary to maintain a high standard of efficiency in armaments, so that opposition can be withstood and privileges enforced.

You can take it from me that Free Trade as a principle means greater employment, and would be one of the chief mediums for peace among the nations. Let us lead in this, and the others will follow.

Perhaps I ought to add a postscript, as it were, to the subject of Protection, by saying that imperial preference is just as incompatible with any notion of vast increase as a tariff wall. For myself, I think if the British Empire had not been a Free Trade Empire, the War of 1914 might have come a decade earlier than it did. The great powers began to realise that preferential treatment within their own communities was likely to be attempted

generally, and, in order to obtain all the raw material they could, the scramble for territory in Africa and Asia commenced. This too was definite pan-Germanism, and that was the soil upon which the seeds of war were planted. Britain, owning the largest Empire, refused to adopt the scheme of imperial preference, happily for the world's sake. But short-sighted politicians persisted all the time in exploiting the policy, and lecturing up and down the country in favour of it, using the shallow argument that it must increase employment to the British workman, and appealing, on jingoistic principles, to a self-efficient and water-tight British Empire.

We must try now, with all the influence we have, to maintain all the world over the open door, and, when Labour comes into power, it will unquestionably break down any beginnings that have been made towards Protection by the present rulers. The way the so-called 'key industries' are being sheltered behind tariffs and duties is wrong. We don't want to plan and plot to preserve some special industry in view of some possible war; we don't want war; but we do want Free Trade for the sake of the workman and the sake of peace.

I do hope that the League of Nations, when it gets to any sort of force in the world, will definitely declare for Free Trade and the open door. What we want, in Mr Wilson's words, is 'the removal of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions.'

CHAPTER XV

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MUNICIPALITIES

A Labour Government will work on a system of devolution. It will not arrogate to itself the management of all the activities of the national machinery. There are some things, such as insurance, education, health, which it will undertake for the good of the entire community. These things, in its view, are matters of interest to the entire public, and are not concerned with any locality in particular. The responsibility of these things should be a general responsibility, and not a local one. Why should a person living in one place pay infinitely more for education than a person living in the next street but under a different authority? And why should a student get an inferior chance of education for the same reason? There is no logic in it. There is no justice in it.

But there are many things which are local in their interest. And we would very largely increase the powers of local government. Why, for instance, should a big authority such as, say, the Manchester City Council have to come to Parliament to get powers to draw water for the inhabitants of their town from Wales or somewhere? It is a costly and entirely unnecessary procedure. They ought to have power to do such a thing upon their own authority. But, to-day, they must come to Parliament, taking up the time of Parliament and paying large fees to local as well as London lawyers

to bring the matter forward and get the necessary formal consent to borrow whatever money they require to carry out the operation which they have decided upon.

If their decision to do a certain thing is wrong, the residents in their city who are primarily concerned have the power, through the ballot-box, to say so, and put into power those men who will do what their community require. This, by the way, makes considerably for local pride, and the sense of local responsibility. It is all to the good that this local patriotism should be fostered, and this would be one and not a small result of increased powers placed in their hands.

But you say they have come to the central authority to borrow the necessary money to carry out any really large scheme. Birmingham, for instance, wanted half a million to lay their pipes from the Ellan Valley and bring their water to the Midland capital. To get that they had to borrow from the then Local Government Board at a certain rate of interest, giving an undertaking to repay in a certain number of years, and, on the surface, it may seem a reasonable thing to do—to have this control upon municipalities.

But, as I have said, if a local authority loses its sense of responsibility in the matter of spending money, it can be deposed at the elections, and there is this to remember, that if the money has to be raised within its own borders there is the more likely to be a careful scrutiny of expenditure than if the sum comes out of official pockets in London, and if the decision is entirely in the hands of that outside authority. With the latter it is largely a business deal. They are there to lend the money at a rate of interest which shows

a right and proper return for the loan. They are not concerned with the rates, and are not affected by their rise or fall. The man who has a house in the suburbs of that city is much more likely to be a careful critic of such expenditure, and we can safely leave the matter in his hands. He will kick, and kick effectively, if he is being overcharged for what he gets. And it need never be the responsibility of the imperial parliament. It is entirely a matter of local politics and local expediency.

'Where is the money coming from, then?' you ask. 'Where is Birmingham to get its half million from?'

The answer is very simple. Every city, every town, should have its own municipal bank. Imagine the position of a great municipality going to a firm of underwriters to back them for a loan. It is almost unbelievable, yet it is done to-day. Why should not the local authority be given powers to take the savings of its inhabitants—those whose interests it has been elected to look after—and use them, paying, of course, a right and proper percentage, for such purposes as I have indicated? How better could the money of the people of Birmingham be invested than in the improvement of its water supply? And what better security could the saving residents have for the interest on their money than their own corporation, which after all means their very existence?

Under Labour the privileges of these corporations would be generously enlarged, and they would be able to become bankers, and, with the invested capital of their own inhabitants, have a balance for them which could be utilised for the improvements which would make for the well-being of all the inhabitants of the town.

But this, of course, is only a small part of the work a municipality might and ought to perform. Already, as we know, many of them provide such things as gas and electricity, though why any such undertakings should be left in the hands of private enterprise I cannot imagine. It only spells lethargy on the part of these authorities. Obviously it is right and proper, and for the good of all, that the local authority should be in charge of such things as gas and electricity. Why allow large profits to go into the pockets of private companies? Those profits should, if they are earned at all, go into the local exchequer and so help to relieve the rates. But it is not only the profit that municipalities should trade. It is entirely true that corporations and town councils can make money out of selling electricity and gas to their inhabitants. But the test of the wisdom of those local authorities running those businesses is, do the inhabitants thereby get better gas, better electricity, and at a cheaper rate?

It is not profit alone that justifies municipal trading. I think that, in addition to gas and electricity, milk should be in the hands of the municipalities—also bread. Think for a moment of the stupidity of perhaps twenty, or perhaps two hundred different milk businesses distributing milk in a town every morning. One, two, three, four, perhaps even six milk carts go up the same road. Think of the enormous waste of effort this entails. All this would be saved by a proper central organisation run under the municipal council. Unquestionably, the price could be much less than it is. The municipality could buy just as well from the farmer as the milk dealer could. Indeed, I am not sure if it would not be

good for large towns to run their own farms, and so get their own milk. But whether this is practicable or not, I want to make this point, that, by the necessary system of inspection which municipalisation would set up, you would not only get cheaper milk, but get purer milk. There would not be the same, shall we say, margin of possibility of dilution as there is to-day. There would probably be more milk, because it would be simple, when supplies were scarce, to ration this commodity, so that the poor, having many children to feed, would get what was necessary for health, even if it meant that the rich, with probably fewer children to feed, would not get more than they really needed, because they happened to have more money.

Bread, too, might come under the local control, and if you have municipal bakeries, and a municipal milk supply, you are going to cut out a good deal of the possibility of hardship among people with trivial incomes.

Now, what are the objections to municipal trading? You will find they mostly come from interested parties—I mean by that, investors in private undertakings. They say that municipal trading increases the rates. That is one of their points. Let us examine it. A corporation decide to run trams. They go to the Local Government Board, and obtain the loan of £100,000, interest upon which has to be paid, and the total has to be paid back to the centre of authority, say, within twenty-one years. This loan comes out of the rates at present. There is no other source from which it can be obtained. 'Oh,' say the objectors to municipal trading, 'look at the debt on the town because these foolish councillors want to run their own trams.'

Now what happens when the private enterprise company comes along and—just in order to keep the example in harmony—obtains permission to run trams in a town? Can they lay down miles of track through the streets, and can they build their tramcars, and can they erect their electric generating station—without money? It is going to cost them just as much as it cost the corporation to lay down its tramway system. Where do they get their money from? They float a company. They get subscribers who invest in the company, thinking to obtain profits upon their investments. They call this their capital.

Now the true economic position is that this capital is exactly equivalent to the loan which the corporation for the same purpose borrow from the Local Government Board. The private company has to pay dividends—if it can; the corporation has to pay interest upon its borrowing. The thing is absolutely identical, except that in the past, as a rule, the corporation loan has been obtained on very advantageous terms—much better terms than investors in industrial concerns expect to pay by way of dividend upon their money, and, if we establish, as I have suggested, municipal banks, these corporations would be in a still far better position, because they would be investing their own money in their own undertakings, and paying themselves interest upon their borrowings.

Some very interesting figures were published by the Board of Trade, which, despite the usual belief to the contrary, show how much better tramways, and gas undertakings, too, are worked under local authorities than they are under private companies. They lay their track cheaper, they

show a better return upon their money, their working expenses are less, and—which is the most important of all—the fare charged to the passenger is less. These figures seem to me to prove conclusively that municipal trading does pay, that it is not extravagantly conducted, and that it does provide a better commodity than that offered by private capital. There is, incidentally, this also to be remembered—that, whereas the track of private enterprise, in the matter of trams and gas and electricity, is strewn with bankruptcies and failures, with their inevitable results of disaster to the private investor, the corporation cannot go bankrupt. So that if you, as a ratepayer, look upon yourself as investor in local trams, you are sure of not losing your money even though you are compulsorily anticipating in the scheme.

Also these municipal undertakings are year by year repaying the capital invested in them, so that in time they become the town's property, and the town free of debt. If they are then in good condition they should provide a greatly increased reduction to the rates, and a cheaper and more efficient service.

Another great objection is that, as a rule, the local councillors are looked upon as being unable to conduct such an undertaking as a tramway scheme. Of course, the point here is that a collection of the veriest fools can obtain the right experience to do these jobs. They do not run the trams. They merely obtain officers of experience and knowledge to do it for them. And it is a fact that a municipality can always get an efficient manager more cheaply than a company can. He says to himself that the job is safe so long as he carries out his duties satisfactorily. The municipality will never go

bankrupt. He is not likely to be dismissed through any personal spite, because he can always have his case discussed in public for all to hear or read.

People also allege that it is unfair for a municipality to trade. You might also say that it is unfair to expect a small shop to compete with big stores. But no one would suggest that we should not have stores. That is the only analogy I can see. I find municipal trading is better, and, to my mind, it would not be right to the community if its municipalities did not make use of its obvious advantages.

The whole trouble here is that the private investor is inclined to be annoyed if a certain field of commercial operation is undertaken by the local authority, not for the purpose of making money so much as to serve the general community. This, thinks the speculator, cuts out the chance for him to exploit the public, and make money for himself.

There is a side to municipal undertakings which cannot be judged upon the basis of competition of private enterprise. While certain of its operations show a direct revenue, there is a branch of municipal work which no private capitalist would undertake, because it shows no profit. Unless the work is done by the local authority it is not done at all. Yet it is to the advantage of the community. Suppose, for instance, there is a congested slum, and the municipality knocks down many of the houses there, and creates a fine, open space where children can play, and fresh air can penetrate. That is to the good of the community as a whole, because it affects the health of the population. In the end, to be sure, it may also improve the rents of the

other houses that remain in the neighbourhood, and, therefore, the landlords may grow rich. But you never find a private speculator make that open space as a private speculation, trusting to some slight charge he might be able to make for admission.

Labour in general would develop the municipal life as far as it could, but there are some things which essentially fall under the heading of nationalisation: coal, railways, etc.

There is one other thing which the municipality at present carries on—and by municipality I mean all urban and county authorities as well—and that is education. This authority would be taken from them and placed under the State at headquarters, its upkeep coming out of the national exchequer. But in every other respect we should endeavour to leave it to the choice of the local authorities, and give them greater freedom and infinitely more powers than they have now to carry on municipal trading and various branches of reform. Housing, for instance; and drink, for instance. We should permit local option in all these things. I do not think there would be any necessity for compulsory legislation in regard to them. By centring power in their hands, we should foster local pride in townships, and give a fillip to the sense of citizenship.

But there is one duty that I should make compulsory, and that is the feeding and clothing of children. This should go upon the Statute Book as a thing municipalities were compelled to do. No child should go to school in a starving condition, or with badly shod feet, and the municipality should have power to obtain the money through the rates for this purpose. It must not be left to

charity which, with all its virtues, is apt to miss the individual cases.

One other thing—while we are upon this subject—I would wipe out the present Poor Law system. We should set out for the abolition of the Board of Guardians. The words 'pauper' and 'Poor Law' would be swept from the Statute Book. More especially as we have abolished the old Local Government Board, and established a Ministry of Health, I want to see the last of the Board of Guardians, and I want to see their work, just as the Education Act is, administered to-day by a committee of the local authority. I would abolish the name of 'workhouse,' and have instead an institution, or institutions, for the disabled and the needy. But not as the present system has it, which separates the needy, and labels all those who are compelled to seek relief. The system of the casual ward is very bad, and a man, if he can work, should always be able to demand existence. He should not, because he needs a bed, be kept breaking stones, thus curtailing his opportunity of finding reasonable work.

All this, however, is part of a larger industrial question of wages and work. It is a fact that, during the war, there were practically no tramps. That was because their work was needed, and, if we can ensure by private organisation that there will be security of tenure to the worker and, consequently, little or no unemployment, if we can make it certain that the man who is willing to work shall have work found for him, we shall find that our casual wards will be pretty well empty, and the problems of the tramp will disappear in the general prosperity of the nation.

It must not be supposed that Labour would

nationalise, or municipalise, everything. There will always be left scope for private endeavour, and it would be a pity if that were ever entirely wiped out. I do not mean because I have not faith in the effort and initiative of the man who works for the State. I believe honestly that, in the end, there would be an added stimulus to the man who was serving his fellows in addition to finding a living for himself. It would not sterilise industry—personal industry, I mean—to think he was more or less secure in his position. He would still do his best—perhaps better than if he worked for himself. I think that, as the idea of the State grew—the idea of all working for all, with, of course, the security of his own position—we should get a higher idea of work. It would spell service rather than mere income. Do not be put off with the common unthoughtful argument that, because a man works for the government, he gives up all sense of responsibility, and loses all ambition to succeed in his job. It is an old cry that. And so often these critics illustrate their argument with comment upon such organisations as the telephone and the post office. The trouble here is that it is not easy to graft on to the ordinary industrial system a national or municipal undertaking. To test the matter properly, you must place in the hands of the community not a stray operation here and there, but all those things that go towards the service of the community. All monopolies. Then we shall cause to grow up amongst us a large army of civil servants who will not shelter behind bundles of red tape and indulge in laziness, but who will be fired by a common ambition to succeed every bit as much as a man may be who works for some private

concern and does his best not only in order to get on, but because he is all the time in fear of dismissal. That fear of unemployment is at the root of more than half the industrial unrest in the world. To wipe it out in government service will contribute enormously to settled conditions, and that means efficiency.

Let us glance at the alternative to nationalisation and municipal control of essentials.

That alternative more often than not is trusts.

Trusts are the industrial equivalent to secret treaties and international alliances. They aim to corner a commodity and then to exploit the public in order to maintain high prices and big dividends. If you can have free competition in the business world all right. But free competition—the very word 'competition'—means a diversity of endeavour, and many competitors striving to obtain public support by means of producing the best article at the lowest profitable price. But where you have a trust you do not have competition, or practically none. Only a small percentage of those who deal in a given article are outside—or it would not be anything approaching a corner or trust—and these have but little power because by their very limited output their appeal of necessity must be trivial.

What we want to reach is a position where all those commodities which are not run by the State, either nationally or locally, such as coal, milk, bread (and why not boots?), are purchased at only a reasonable percentage over the cost of production. Instead, to-day, we find capitalist combinations operate in some form at almost every stage of production from the raw material up to the point when the article is handed over the

counter to the purchaser. Even distribution is implied in this.

In what can the ordinary purchaser be sure he is being charged no more than is required to defray the necessary costs of manufacture and distribution plus a reasonable profit to those who necessarily must handle the goods? Even if new labour-saving machinery is introduced, there is no guarantee that the saving in cost of producing an article means any reduction in the cost to the producer. The manufacturer pockets it—he and his shareholders. And if the government place any new tax upon a commodity, it is never adequately shared by producer and purchaser. On the contrary, it is almost invariably made the excuse for an *added* profit. The salesman or the manufacturer puts not only the whole of the tax on to the article, but adds to it, to compensate himself for possible reduction in demand.

As a digression, it would be our policy not only to nationalise coal mines, but to municipalise the distribution of coal in the towns and urban districts.

When you get a ring in business you may be very sure these facts apply in double force. The very object of the ring is admittedly to increase prices. As against this, it is opportune here to mention, the chief object of municipal trading is to reduce prices. A local authority is not provoked to charge what the trade—and the public—will stand. It aims at charging as *little* as the cost of production will bear.

Another name for the working of trusts is profiteering. Now a profiteer cannot exist if there is no secret treaty between the various manufacturers of a given commodity. The co-operative movement has been one means to

checking prices. They return their profits to their members, and they do not endeavour to make much more than their working expenses. The national factories during the War were also valuable in this respect, and it would be a good thing to perpetuate them in the production of essentials.

In this connection an additional emphasis is found in favour of no tariffs. These capitalistic combines are only too anxious to see an import duty put upon foreign goods similar to those they are making. The free ingress of goods from abroad—Germany or anywhere else—will always help to keep down prices, and that is why you find it is the capitalistic class who are keenest upon preferential treatment and protection. They do not make these proposals for the good of the working classes. They want to keep out the foreigner in order to keep up prices and in order to increase their own profits.

Since Labour organises, it is only reasonable for employers to federate also. It is desirable, indeed, that organised Labour should have an amalgamated interest to deal with. If there is any question of working conditions, houses and wages to be discussed, Labour could not discuss it with employers unless the employers had some representative organisation. But just as all discussions of this sort always are made public, so ought all agreements between employers to be published. They should be filed where inspection is possible and simple. This is the local industrial application of the principle we have outlived in regard to international affairs. We will not have secret diplomacy in business, secret trusts organised not to discuss questions with Labour, but entirely

aiming at exploiting the purchasing public by unnecessarily high prices. And just as eventually all international relationships will need to be ratified by Parliament, and so become subject to open discussion, so ought a government department be empowered to examine, approve or disapprove, and report upon, all trustification of British industries. The best of all methods of defeating unfair control of commodities is publicity, and with the press free and unfettered as it is to-day public opinion need never go uninformed where abuses exist in this direction, provided such arrangements were compulsorily filed for public inspection. To open to government inspection the accounts of these trusts would be a wise safeguard.

Labour in power will certainly break what trusts may exist for unfair private gains, and will tend, wherever possible, to place under either the national or local authorities the control—not necessarily the actual management, but certainly the control—of the production and distribution of all essentials.

CHAPTER XVI

WOMEN

When I remind my readers that when the woman adult suffrage comes in—as it unquestionably will, especially when Labour is in power, for we are all in favour of it—women will hold the majority of votes in the country, I do not wish them to assume that we, as a party, intend to pander in any way to that voting power. Whatever we may suggest by way of legislation in favour of women will be strictly in accordance with our general principles of government. We shall merely place women on an equality with men in all political and economical considerations.

Why we should assume that a boy of 18, because he has been a soldier, is more intelligent (and, therefore, entitled to a vote) than a woman of 29, is beyond my comprehension. We have passed the age when woman is looked upon as the inferior or the weaker sex. She is coming more and more out into business and, in certain branches, is making a big success of her venture.

I should like to state quite definitely that I, personally, have no objection to the competition of women, as women, in the workshops. There have been natural feelings of jealousy on the part of men when they, coming back from the War, have found the jobs they left in order to fight being held by women. There was, I know, a reaction from this which caused the arguments to be brought

forward in Trade Union circles objecting to women being employed in their particular trades. Though this may have been so in certain restricted areas of industry, our policy for the future will exclude no woman from any occupation, as long as she is prepared to come in on the same terms as a man, and expects no special considerations other than the reasonable provisions of rest and healthy surroundings—which we hope one day to obtain for all workers of whatever sex.

The woman worker will have the same pay as the man. You cannot make any differences. Equal pay for equal work, to my mind, is unassailable. There will, however, be certain classes of work from which women will be excluded—not because of any question of competition, but purely out of consideration for womanhood, because these particular trades I refer to are either dangerous or necessitate night work. Labour will bring in legislation compelling the abolition of all night work for women in industry. It is altogether unnatural and wrong that a woman should be engaged during the night in the factory or in the office. I think very soon that this law will apply the world over. The only exceptions to it to be made, of course, are in connection with maternity and the nursing profession.

Women, too, must be excluded from dangerous occupations. There are facts and figures to prove that women, on becoming mothers, have suffered because of their previous employment in certain industries—such as those that include the handling of lead. Furthermore, mortality among infants is always greater where the mother has been engaged in work of this description.

It is true in this country that women are excluded

from many processes involving the contact with lead, but we might go much further and extend the list of dangerous trades. In Japan, for instance, the prohibition covers work in places in which dust or gas are generated from arsenic, mercury, yellow (white), phosphorus, prussic acid, fluorine, aniline, chrome, chlorine, or other chemical compounds, or from other similar poisonous substances. I do not like to think that we should be behind Japan in protecting our own from any danger of this kind, and I am glad to feel that we are already considering regulations dealing with processes in which mercury is used.

In this matter one does not want to work in any restricted area. We want to make these advantages world-wide.

As you know, there has been established an international Labour Office, which is the industrial side of the League of Nations. Anything that is done in any country would have a direct influence upon this office, and, therefore, the medium by which every government in the civilised world, who is a signator to the League of Nations, would be affected.

Here is a great task for Labour, and one of the biggest branches of it, not only from the point of view of women, but also from the point of view of man workers, is the constant effort of scientists to discover any improvement in conditions which are producing the poisonous results of work with lead and mercury, etc. Labour will spare no effort or money on research work. We shall spare no effort or money on experiments in wiping out such things as plumbism, and it can be done by finding harmless substitutes for dangerous ingredients in manufacture. We have already

discovered a leadless glaze. During the War there was a substitute found for tetrachlorethane in dopes used for aeroplane wings, which was so fruitful in producing cases of poisoning, and, no doubt, by the cultivation of research work, many other evils of labour could be eliminated.

Meantime, women should be kept out of all such processes. But it is Labour's object as far as possible to wipe out the necessity of married women working at all. When we read of the number of miscarriages that women suffer, entirely because of their occupation in certain dangerous processes, one realises the appalling crime it is that conditions should be such as to have to make them work in order to maintain their households. Woman's sphere of influence is the home, and we must endeavour to see to it that, first, every willing worker in the country should have sufficient income to keep a wife and family, and sufficient security of tenure in his work as not to fear unemployment for any long periods, and, secondly, that, while unmarried women should be allowed to enter into all branches of healthy occupation, there should be the most stringent regulations against them being engaged in any of the poisonous trades I have mentioned, because it has been demonstrated by statistics that miscarriages follow the marriage of those women who have been engaged in such trades as the lead industry.

I do not think that women will ever dominate the politics in this country. The basic motives of her existence, her dreams, aims, her instincts, all call her away from the political arena, and into the home. But still it is a fact that she will have a tremendous voting power, and should ever any big question arise, there is no doubt that we must be

ready for the women of the country to come forward, almost in one, and say, 'You shall not do this.'

There are one or two problems in which mere man has cheerily gone on and got himself into a hole; woman would be much more determined in her efforts. It is that same instinctive dislike of a man to put up with the inconvenience of a crowd in order to get a bargain, whereas women will fight to get in, if her interest is sufficiently roused.

And it is a good thing for the country. The indifference of men has permitted such disastrous things as secret diplomacy to exist for generations. His lack of political enthusiasm has permitted a few men, who happened to be in power, to make agreements and arrangements which have resulted in war, and the average male has rather come to look upon such a catastrophe as war as being unavoidable, and, on the whole, rather a sporting event. If there is never to be another war you will have to thank the women for it. They will come forward practically as one and turn out any government who are complacently anticipating any participation in any war. And it is only right that they should have this veto, since it is the woman who suffers all the time. Her part in war is infinitely the greatest. It is her agony far rather than the soldier's, and it is only right that she, who brought the soldiers into the world, should prohibit war. Now that she has the vote she will be able to do this, especially if we can really establish a system of open diplomacy. And it is only if we can do that that any body of public influence will impress itself effectively. If a government makes treaties with other governments, and if those governments are threatened and attacked, their

friends must, under their contract, come to their aid. No one can then say, 'Stand off!'

The time to discuss the possibility of war is not the week before it breaks out, but is when these arrangements among the nations are being made, if ever they are to be made. It is then the voice of women should be heard, and it is then that I think you will hear it. In the industrial world, too, her voice will be very big.

I do not anticipate any large majority among women taking any particularly enthusiastic part in local government. Although they have the vote, and everything is now open to them, it is interesting to notice that there is at the moment of writing only one woman member of Parliament. When Labour comes into power, however, women will be greatly encouraged and helped in every way to enter Parliament, to join Cabinets, even to the extent of a woman becoming Prime Minister of England, if she should be eminently suited to, and the right person for, that position.

There is one thing, I think, that women will always do when the big emergency arises, they will always vote in favour of industrial peace, and never of strikes or upheaval. For here again the woman at home is the one who stands the racket when her husband and sons are out of work, and there is only the small strike pay allowance upon which to eke out a hazardous existence.

It is certain that the day when women workers approached the sphere of slavery is past. We all know quite well that it has been the custom for many long years, wherever and whenever women have been brought into the industrial arena, to employ them on sweated wages and with a view to the general lowering of the standard of labour.

Consider the long hours at which shirtmakers had to work to gain even the most miserable pittance; the appalling conditions under which the Cradley Heath chain workers were employed; think of the great army of sweated home-workers —the matchbox makers and the artificial flower makers, who by working unceasingly from dawn until the small hours of the night succeeded, and than only with help from other members of the family, in gaining a few miserable shillings a week with which to keep body and soul together. The general acquiescence in this deplorable state of affairs shows the inhuman views that so long prevailed on the subject of women's work.

Then came the great world conflict, and women were called upon to mobilise themselves for war work. Happily the trades union movement had become sufficiently strong by then—and, indeed, the public mind had so happily altered for the good that the conditions were altogether different from those which had previously existed.

As a consequence of this we find to-day not only that women are working in a more congenial atmosphere than they ever dreamt of in the past; not only that they are treated with the consideration that is their due; but that in the main they are enjoying the same rates as those paid to men—and what is still more important to remember, they are being organised; and this means that they will have the full benefits and advantages of combination to protect their labour in the future.

It would, however, be foolish to assume that the present abnormal demand for labour of any kind will continue, and it is necessary, therefore, to keep clearly in mind that we must sooner or

later, in the very nature of things, revert to a more or less normal period when, instead of employers begging for labour, labour may, unfortunately, find itself begging for employment.

It is when we reach the realisation of that possibility that we have to consider whether or not women will be unfair competitors in the labour movement, and whether the nation will continue to benefit from their labour.

Now, with regard to the first point, judging by the keen interest which the women are showing in the work they have undertaken, notwithstanding the fact that they are learning and becoming proficient in what hitherto has been exclusively men's labour, there is growing up a very strong and welcome bond of comradeship.

Labour in power, however, will not rely on a sense of comradeship merely. It will legislate directly in favour of equal pay, and that will wipe out any possibility of ill feeling on the part of the male worker. It will be straight competition, a fair field and no favour. Who desires or should expect anything better than that?

It may be that, as a rule, the man will win in work against the woman. There are some branches of employment where she will always lead. But, even supposing she is not largely employed in the factory, will it not have the effect of making her think more of home-keeping. That is for the good of the State. And if we can provide that at the age of twenty-one our capable workman is earning a wage sufficient to keep a wife, and maybe a small family, this tendency of the woman towards her natural functions of the home will bring back the average marriage age to the old time level—which is far nearer twenty than thirty.

CHAPTER XVII

THE LEAGUE OF PEOPLES

In principle, of course, the Labour Party supports the League of Nations. It did, indeed, hold out some hope that the end of international friction was in sight, and that, if the leaders of the peoples in every country honestly sought to push forward the great scheme, the world at length might find peace. We saw some hope of doing away for ever with the secret intrigues between nations, and a return to a state of creating a universal desire to promote not the narrow interests of this or that country, but the good of the world.

It was a dream, and, like most dreams, has suffered a fading process. How far we are after Spa and Geneva from those ideals which Wilson put before the world and upon which peace was arranged!

It has been growing steadily in the minds of those who think for the large mass of the workers in every country that the need for revision of the Versailles Treaty is a fundamental necessity before we can progress far along the lines of world reform. We see clearly that, in the terms of that treaty, are set the seeds which must, of necessity, poison the future and bring back war, which is unthinkable, knowing as we do what lengths of horror any further outbreak of fighting would entail.

It is only fair that Germany should pay. She must make reparation for the wrongs she inflicted

upon Europe. If that were not done we should be losing an opportunity to leave posterity a lesson —that the criminal aggressor shall be rewarded by punishment and not by profit. But the Peace Treaty has gone further than that. For instance, it should have permitted France only to obtain the coal from the Saar valley mines, and not to have handed over the district itself into the hands of the French for them to govern. France had her great coal mines destroyed in her northern provinces, and that German mines should supply the coal France thus cannot mine for herself is perfectly just. But the occupation by the French must cause irritation for years to come, and recreate the old Alsace-Lorraine trouble, only from the opposite angle.

There is in the treaty far too much that can be put down to vindictiveness. It will not pay in the long run. It does not spell peace. Even the Alsace-Lorraine matter was not handled in accordance with our own assertions as to the right of peoples to determine their own destinies. The population of these provinces was not consulted when they were handed back, though in the Allied Memorandum of War Aims in 1918 it was laid down: 'France can properly agree to a fresh consultation of the population of Alsace and Lorraine as to their own desires.'

Then again, if there is anything meant by the authority of a League of Nations, surely this authority should have supervised the plebiscites in Silesia and East Prussia. Instead they have been carried out under the auspices of an Allied Commission. And all the limitations that have been placed upon the several districts that are largely German determining their own allegiance

should be removed. These people should freely say under what Government they wish to live. It should be the wishes of the inhabitants that should be thought of, and not the interests of capital and the acquiring of economic rights by the victors.

Self-determination should have been respected most rigidly. We made so much of it, talked so glibly of ' no annexations.' Yet the right ' freely to choose their allegiance ' has been violated in the case of the Germans in Czecho-Slovakia, of the Tyrolese Highlands, important districts of West Prussia (which have been added to Poland for strategic and economic reasons) the district of Menel, and, during a generation, the Saar Valley, while, in a more limited sense, there is the refusal to allow German Austria to unite with the main German body. The point I want to make is this, that here we have a vast population all embittered by the Peace, and which, in the aggregate, constitutes a larger population than Alsace and Lorraine. And we all know how those provinces, torn from France, poisoned the relations of the European countries for half a century.

Certainly it serves Germany right. On that ground we could have gone infinitely farther than we have done. There is hardly any end to what could have been done and yet have overshot the position in which we could have said it served them right. There was no justification for the War at all; the whole of the tragedy of it lies largely at Germany's door. But two considerations enter here. The first is that it makes no distinction between these few arrogant Junkers who really caused the War, planned for it, hoped for it, and the great mass of German people who, granted,

were foolish enough to allow themselves to be governed by these people, but who had as little to do with declaring war as the working men of this country have had in manipulating the war in Russia.

The second and more important point is, of course, that it is of the peace of the future of which we are thinking, or of which we ought to be thinking; the happiness and comfort and security of the generations to come. That it serves Germany right is not the basis of a durable peace. It is the basis of the next war, the impulse which will lend help to those who wish to return to the old Junker rule. The old alliances. The old balance of power. It discredits the League of Nations.

But there are causes of war hidden in the economic side of the treaty even more abundantly than in the more political and territorial side.

What we are proposing to do is to say to Germany the prisoner: 'You are fined so much for your misdeeds, also you will have to go to prison for so many years.' The thing is impossible.

Our best way of getting the money for reparation from Germany is not to cripple her trade. We must encourage her to be productive, or we shall get nothing. We shall get promises, under threats of ultimatums, but that will not pay for the rebuilding of France. We shall not get money unless Germany can make money by produce. Yet, as an American writer has pointed out, the Treaty gives the Entente dictatorship over the industrial system out of which Germany has to pay. This was never stipulated for under the armistice. The unconditional surrender of German militarism is accompanied by the unconditional surrender of German commerce.

What really has happened is that decisions were made on political grounds without any full consideration as to the economic possibilities of carrying them into effect. They were impossible of realisation, and the sooner we grasp this the better. When Labour comes into power the Treaty will be revised, and I fear a thorough revision will never be effected until Labour is the controlling influence in British Government.

We shall not be lenient towards Germany—we are as conscious as any one else of her wrongs as a nation, seeing it was from the ranks of Labour that the majority of our soldiers came, with all the concomitant agony and personal loss that fact means. But we are out for larger ends. We want to see the world at peace, we want to see labour all over the world get justice, and since we wish to get full reparation from Germany we understand that we must not trample her down and prevent her industrial development. We have no election cries to urge us to do that which is not expedient and for the general good of the peace.

The League of Nations is the right medium for keeping the industrial balance as well as the political peace of the world. This authority, if properly handled, would control, for instance, the supply of raw material without which production cannot go on. We shall never foster economic wars. There must be economic equality, no tariff walls, no protection and imperialist preference.

Look at the position for one moment. If we grant a preference on tea to India, or to Egypt on cotton, or to Canada on wheat, we expect a preference to be given to our goods in those markets. The immediate result of that is to penalise the

goods of other nations in those markets. We therefore become hostile to those other countries. The larger grows our trade in these preferential countries the greater grows the antagonisms of other rivals. What is the result ?

These rivals, cut out from these special markets, look around to do the same thing to us. France expands her empire in Africa, Japan hers in China, America hers in Mexico. It is all bound to lead to greater and greater rivalry.

This in turn is backed up by armaments. We get back to that stupid race for naval and military power which preceded the Great War. The burden of creating these huge armies and navies on the top of the terrible taxation we are at present bearing will make life impossible. That way ruin lies. And there is no need for it. There is no reason for this small spirit of exclusion and of preference. The open door is the only policy which will lead to universal development, and Labour will lead the world in this whenever it has the right to decide what the policy of this country shall be. The League of Nations, under our scheme, would control all this raw material, and see that every country had its share, so that it might develop its trade as far as the general supply of material the world over permitted. This, not in the interest merely of that country as a nationality, but because whenever you create an economic war you must, in the end, hit at the workers.

This point is not a new one that has been brought out since the War ended. It was part of our considered view as expressed in the Labour War Aims in February, 1918, wherein it was declared:—

'All attempts at economic aggression, whether

by Protective Tariffs or Capitalist Trusts or Monopolies, inevitably result in the spoliation of the working classes of the several countries for the profit of the capitalists; and the working class see in the alliance between Military Imperialists and the Fiscal Protectionists in any country whatsoever not only a serious danger to the prosperity of the masses of the people, but also a grave menace to Peace.'

The Treaty will have to be revised in this respect.

I must now pass on to the larger view of the League of Nations as I see it for the future.

It is one of the saddest facts connected with the peace that this great movement has fallen into inconsequence. It should have aroused an inspiration that should enliven humanity all over the world. A great vision to realise which would have changed the whole course of history. Instead it has become a shadowy shrine at which lip service only is offered by the majority.

There are, to be sure, a few enthusiasts who have said that this movement for the world's peace is the only thing in politics worth while for them. They throw over intrigue, secret treaties, the arts and little ways of the mere diplomatists. This is profoundly to their credit. But what the League needs is for the workers of the world to back it, and that will never be until the workers of the world have the power to say what shall be done, having at their backs the necessary voting strength to support their actions. This will come, we feel sure, and there is nothing more likely to bring it about than the total failure of the professional politicians to realise what the League might become.

Every woman voter especially ought to look at this matter for herself, and with all seriousness. I should like to say to her: 'This is your great opportunity to save any future wars with all their horrors and agonies and loss of son and husband. Support it with all the power you have, help us to make it vital, real, the greatest power there is in the world.'

Which, of course, means an essential change in its constitution. And here I want to emphasise that the very name of it should be altered. It should not be the League of Nations, but the League of Peoples, and I will explain what the difference means.

It is true that there is a Labour side to the League. There was established, when the terms of the Treaty were drawn up, an International Labour charter. That is a very big step forward along the path which, one day, will lead to justice being done to the worker on the same generous principles in one country as another. Already a great deal has been done by this organisation, and the Industrial Committee of the League, which has met in Washington, has collected most valuable information on vital labour subjects, and issued important recommendations. In such cases as employment of women and children the various governments have definitely promised to bring in legislation to put these recommendations into effect.

Also, one of the great points about the International Labour Committee is that, having been set up, it cannot now be discharged. It is separate from the League itself, and so, even in the grave eventuality of the League failing, the Labour organisation it has set up would go on—and

perhaps with increasing power restart a League that would succeed and demand respect of the civilised world.

Because it would be a League of Peoples.

At present minorities within a nation have no power of expression, are given no opportunity to give effect to the thoughts of what may be quite an important portion of the community. England has a vote. That vote is cast on behalf of—whom? The people? No, it is cast in accordance with the instructions of the Cabinet at the moment in power. You cannot compress the considered opinions of 40,000,000 people into a vote.

But, it may be argued, the majority must be allowed to rule. Is there any asurance that the vote would represent the views of the majority? It is often an open question whether the Government really represents the majority of the voters of the country.

But this is beside the point, because there is a far better scheme which, if carried out—and Labour would do its best to promote it—would ensure the varying opinions of all the world being represented on the League in the strength according to their degree of acceptance in the world.

There should be a world Parliament.

In the first place this League, whatever its name, must have representatives of all free peoples upon it. As long as it is only composed of the victorious nations it is little better than an alliance. Every one must be represented, since in all international matters every one is affected. Germany should have been admitted immediately the Peace Treaty was signed, and every month's delay only gave cause for increased suspicions on their part. We want to be rid of suspicions. If Germany

had come in at the start, many of the troubles, territorial and economic, which followed Peace, and were the occasions of ultimatums on our part, would never have been necessary. Crises would have become subjects of discussion, and would have found easier solution. Meanwhile, it would not have been necessary to reduce by one iota all reasonable claims for reparation, or our demands for the full and sufficient punishment of all war criminals.

But even that would not be sufficient.

So a League of Peoples' Parliament must be something more than a mere debating club or an advisory committee. It must have power to legislate. This is the road along which we may eventually reach complete free trade, which, if it could be complete, would be objected to by none, which would lower prices to every consumer, increase general production, and make the world in the end wealthier. Law is more likely to succeed than arms, and arbitration than oppression. We shall, in the end, get international laws, not unwritten, but on a world Statute book, and those who break them will have to know the rest of the peoples will combine to enforce them. That fear will be sufficient to keep the wilful to the right path. The international law-breaker is not likely to have a very pleasant time. And a nation will become an outlaw just as soon as it disobeys the ruling of the League. It can come there and make out its case; if it succeeds well and good, if the concensus of the world's opinion is against it, then it must fall into line, and it is not probable that it will wish to do anything other.

It might be tempted to try this with the constitution as it has been originally drawn up. At present

on this assembly of delegates you might very well have a conservative landlord representing this country, voting for the entire forty-five millions of residents in the land. On the face if it that is wrong, and it would perhaps lead a socialistic government to say to itself, 'Yes, we know the League vetoed us, but we are convinced that if we do as we meant to we shall have the support of the labouring classes all over the world. We'll risk it; we don't think our colleagues among the workers in other countries will take up arms against us.'

It's a pretty serious possibility, and constitutes a weakness of the League. But if those workers were fully represented on the body which made the decision against the supposed government over their dispute they would not be able to persuade themselves that some influence, some faction, would support them in breaking the law laid down by the League.

You don't give the power to legislate to your home Cabinet, they have to come to Parliament for sanction in practically every move they take for every new law that is made. Why then should you give power to make decisions to an international committee ? You must have the same parliamentary control there that you insist on—and quite rightly insist on—at home.

We in power would send to such a Parliament as I have outlined a number of representatives reflecting the opinions in the House at home in exactly the same way as we propose to create a Second Chamber at home instead of the House of Lords, though, of course, if it were wished the country could elect their representatives for the League at the polls just as they now elect their

Members of Parliament. Either way guarantees that public opinion is directly recorded. It is necessary to break away from the idea that the representatives should be members of the executives of the nation. The way Labour will seek to make the League a real thing is to invest it with far more power than at present, and then to enlarge its number of representatives. We should seek to create a Parliament of all peoples, a permanent body who would discuss those things which had to do with the peace of the world, with all manner of relations between nations, whether concerning politics pure and simple, or matters of employment of the workers.

This Parliament would have in proportion the same party representation as was in existence in the home Parliament. This could easily be arranged on a system of proportional representation, a system which we should certainly introduce into our own domestic elections. Thus all branches of thought at home would be reflected at this world Parliament, and the same would apply to all other countries.

It is not, of course, suggested that the work of the League could be done with this large body acting as an executive. It would appoint its own Cabinet, so to speak, but all decisions would have to be ratified by the Parliament, and then brought before the attention of the home Parliaments. The whole business would be open to the world's criticism at all stages. There would no longer be the possibility of secret understandings between nations, everything would be open and above board.

If such a body had been in existence in 1914 there would have been no explosion such as followed

the murders at Serajevo, there would have been no war. But as it took the War to make the world see this it will be a million pities if the lesson is not taken to heart to the fullest possible extent, and the possibility of such an occurrence breaking out again made out of the question.

Supposing, however, the League, had there been one, had settled the difference between Austria and Serbia, it would have wanted powers far greater than the League at present pretends to. Austria, or any other State which happens to be in the geographical position, can without any interference place such duties upon transit through its domain, that a landlocked country could be crippled. Suppose the countries that lie round Switzerland decided to strangle that country's trade, it would be the easiest thing in the world. Tariffs could make it impossible for her to do any trade at all save within her own borders, and everything going into the country could be made so dear to bring in that the price of everything would be prohibitive, and throw the country out of competition with the rest of the world.

The whole of the ground needs further exploration, but it is sufficiently clear to me that a League of Peoples will go far to prevent the wars that the generals tell us are sure to come. The causes which might lead to war are sure to arise, that we must all recognise. But it is not thinkable that, with women soon to have the power to vote the world over upon reaching twenty-one years of age, a Parliament of Peoples will not find a way to avoid disaster, to adjust the differences between nations, and so bring in the real reign of peace.

Just what powers it would be necessary to give to this central authority it is not the moment to

dogmatise about, but again there are some things clear. It must be in a position to regulate the supply of raw materials. It must assist in the maintenance of credit, that is purchasing power in the various countries, so that each may obtain a fair allocation of materials. It would be able to encourage the supply of important things by stimulating production in various countries, and so there would not be a world shortage of things really needed. It would have its fingers upon any trusts of an international character, whose operations might be likely to aim at exploiting the public by making undue profits and holding back supplies. And not the least of their aims should be flinging wide the door for the produce of all nations to enter all nations, and so sweep away the restricting tariff walls which can never benefit the workers nor the community as a whole.

That last is the acid test to which all our laws will be submitted. Labour policy will benefit the community. Labour ignores vested interests; it prohibits a few privileged persons battening on the work of the masses; but, let me add as a final word, it never will seek other than justice for every branch of the population.

It might be thought that, just as to-day the workers are suspicious of the Government, because Government even yet comes from the class who own, who employ, so when the workers govern, employers will return the compliment, and be suspicious of them.

I believe we shall defeat this threat. I think they will find that our demands are reasonable. They will see that all we claim is a first charge on industry to the point of a reasonable share in the decencies and comforts—not luxuries, note—of

life. And I am optimistic enough to hope that, when they see our objects are fair play all round, when they have it proved to them that our administration will mean industrial peace, with all the stupendous saving that means, they will be ready, not only to give us the credit for having the good of the community at heart, but will come forward and associate themselves with our ideals both in home and international affairs.

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